POWERBOAT&RIB ISSUE 164 - OCTOBER 2020 - AUTUMN ISSUE

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NO.164 OCTOBER 2020

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Style, space and practicality - the distinctive GT36 is a boat built for a wide appeal.

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MOB
N 38°51.33
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LIGHT
UP·MENU
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GARMIN

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A true driver's boat whose attention to detail is only matched by its superb fit and finish.

BRIG Eagle 6.7 p46

Quick, responsive and versatile, the latest Eagle from BRIG is a stylish boat with a keen price tag, as Greg Copp reports …

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Greg Copp explores a small boat with a big-boat attitude, built for fun and constructed to last.

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Jeanneau Cap Camarat 12.5 WA p36

A tough all-weather fast fisher that combines practicality, style and performance in healthy measures.

New PWC from Yamaha p42

From the simple jet ski concept to a 'marinised missile', Yamaha's new fleet of PWC show no compromise.

Arksen 60 p54

Built for the ultimate long-range adventure, this is a passage maker like no other.

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or call **01884 266100** to subscribe today

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THE GENERATION GAME

Based on the banks of the Middle Thames, the family firm Peter Freebody & Co. has, from generation to generation, been devoted to the business of boatbuilding and maritime craftsmanship. Today, the yard continues in the fine traditions of the past, but outward appearances can be deceiving.

FEATURED

Island Hopping in the Inner Hebrides p78

Peter Talbot tells of visiting some of the islands of the Inner Hebrides, in the Firth of Lorn National Scenic Area on Scotland's west coast, with his friend Tom. In settled weather, they enjoy boating west, south and north from the Isle of Luing, carefully avoiding the worst of the region's tidal races ...

Breaking with Tradition p92

The sharing industry is growing in every area, including holiday homes, planes, cars, offices, tools and much more. Boats are no exception. HMS interviews Alexandre von Heeren, MD of Mandaris Marine, a company that has recently launched the MemberBoats Club of Malta - an initiative responsible for offering a modern-thinking and creative alternative to traditional boat ownership ...

Beacons of Hope p102

Using the next-generation 406MHz beacons and enhanced Cospas-Sarsat international satellite system, today's recreational boaters have even more advanced technology at their fingertips to alert search and rescue of their exact location in an emergency ...

Rebuilding Bullfinch p110

Mike Taylor samples the delights of a Brooke Marine day launch ...

Tested to the Limit p116

PBR invites Frank Kowalski of Safehaven Marine to share his first-hand knowledge of one of South-West Ireland's most challenging areas of coastline and finds out how these waters have not only influenced his company's all-weather boat designs but also the skills he and his team have acquired over 20 years of sea-trialling among some of the most extreme tidal seas the Atlantic has to offer.

COLUMNS

Late Starters: How to Prepare and Stay Safe this Autumn p130

With the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, you'd be forgiven for thinking that we'd never make it onto the water this summer. But here we are, having emerged from the safety of our homes to enjoy the thrill and freedom that boating brings to so many of us. If you're planning some Autumn boating, take some time to prepare your boat for fun days at sea. Here are some top tips from the RYA on how to go boating in a safe and considerate manner ...

What a Year! p134

At the beginning of the year, little did we know what it held for us all. Despite the devasting consequences for some, for many it's been a summer of getting into boating or spending more time afloat than they ever dreamed possible. But what next? Paul Glatzel looks ahead...

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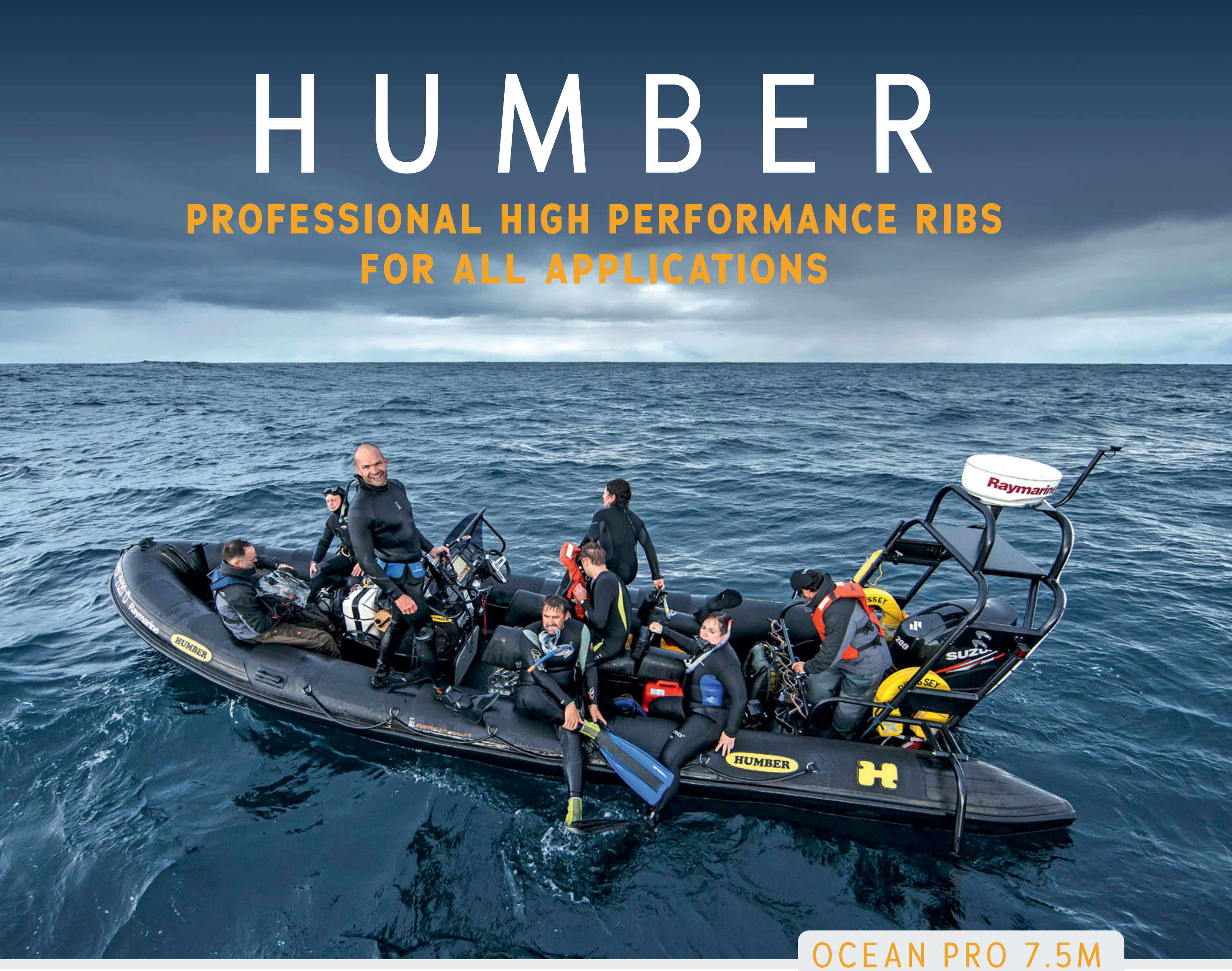
Jim Russell, of AeroMarine Research, discusses the issue of porpoising, why it happens and how to fix it ...



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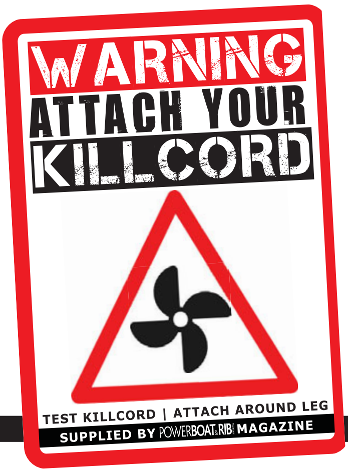
We are delighted to announce that in conjunction with PBR's project partners: Simrad, Mercury, Vanclaes and MDL, late September will see us taking delivery of a 2021, adventure spec'd, Axopar 28 Cabin craft.

Welcome to Issue 164 - October 2020

'Small-boat adventuring' can mean many things to many people. Furthermore, it's also relative to one's horizons. If you were thinking of crossing mighty oceans, a Nordhavn 43 would rightly be considered a 'small craft'. When we took a pair of 6.5m Humber Pros from the Shetlands across the North Sea to Norway and up beyond the Arctic Circle, these fully spec'd Humber RIBs were most certainly 'small' in relation to the task in hand. Likewise, circumnavigating Britain and then Ireland in 4.8m RIBs impressed on me not just how small 'small' can be but also how capable 'small' can be!

Peter Talbot's exploration of the Western Isles of Scotland aboard his Suzuki-powered Zodiac inflatable is another case in point. Indeed, his story in this 164th edition of PBR perfectly encapsulates the spirit of 'small-boat adventuring' and goes to prove that you don't need a big boat, certainly not a Nordhavn (as nice as it would be to own one!), to enjoy the spirit of adventure or the pleasure of exploring new horizons. As you will see on Powerboat & RIB's social media, the PBR team have been taking a leaf out of Peter's book these past few weeks, courtesy of a very smart Honda-powered Honwave inflatable. This great little craft has had us exploring sea caves and isolated coves, boating sedately down the River Thames and even undertaking a night passage across Torbay! But with autumn on its way and the seas growing more testing, here at PBR we've had our sights set on a vessel small enough to tow/slipway-launch, but large enough and with sufficient protection to go adventuring in most weathers. To this end, we are delighted to announce that in conjunction with PBR's project partners: Simrad, Mercury, Vanclaes and MDL, late September will see us taking delivery of a 2021, adventure spec'd, Axopar 28 Cabin craft. PBR's new 'flagship' will not only be used to sea-trial and test new technologies but will also provide us with an invaluable on-water film studio. In line with the strengths of this particular breed of all-weather boat, we shall be undertaking a number of coastal and offshore explorations with the intention of bringing you our findings and discoveries along the way. The next edition will see a full overview of not only the Axopar 28, but also the stainless steel Vanclaes trailer she'll be riding on, the Mercury Verado outboard propelling her, and the Simrad comms and navigation guiding her, as well as a tour of the Axopar's on-water home hosted by MDL Marinas.

Lastly, if, like many, your boating is off to a late start this year, or, like us, you're only just getting afloat with your new pride and joy, then the article 'Late Starters' is for you. If, however, you were quick off the mark and are already pondering 2021, then Paul Glatzel's 'What a Year!' is written especially with you in mind. But wherever you are in the stream of time, we wish you well and hope you enjoy this next instalment of all things Powerboat & RIB!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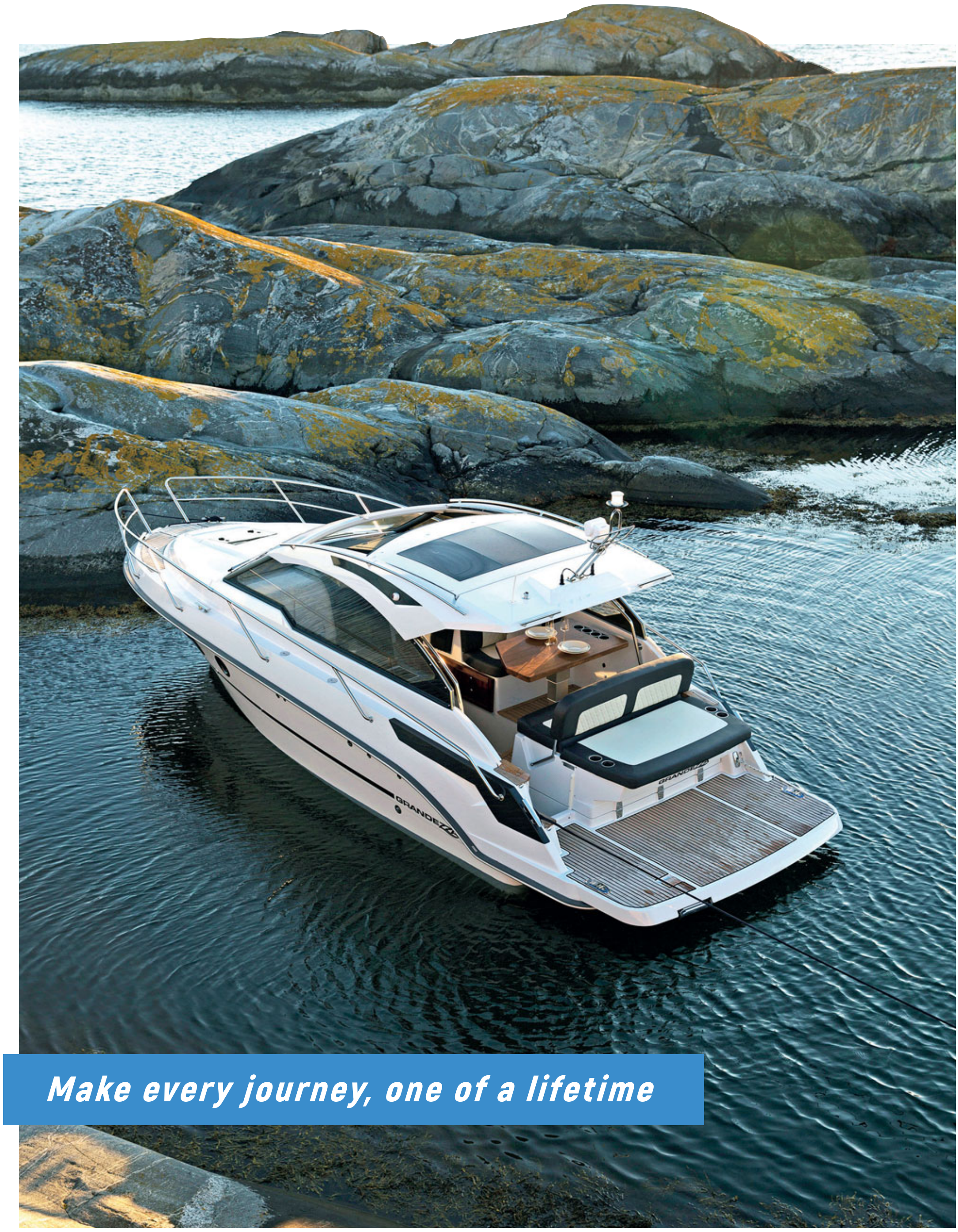

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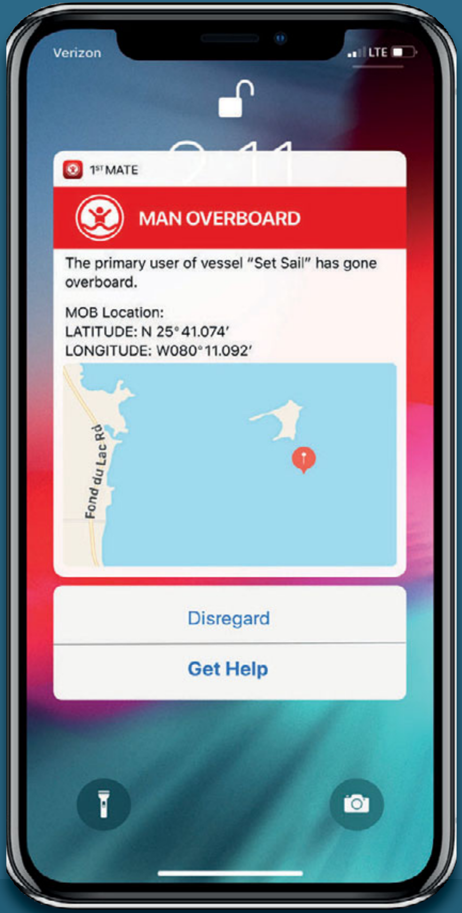
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The primary user of vessel "Set Sail" has gone overboard.

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- Location marked via GPS on app and vessel multifunction displays (if equipped)
- Alerts sent to mobile app and wearables of connected captain and other passenger(s)
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Average **Buyer Age** Decreases

For many years, the average age of someone purchasing a boat has been consistently increasing - until now, according to Info-Link Technologies, a Florida-based market intelligence company focusing on the marine industry.

'As the demand for boats continues to soar, especially among first-time buyers, we are seeing another encouraging trend.

'As we have heard many times over the years, our customer base is ageing, but this year is different,' says Info-Link managing director Jack Ellis. 'As the demand for boats continues to soar, especially among first-time buyers, we are seeing another encouraging trend. This year's boat buyers are considerably younger than past years' buyers. Up to mid-2020, the average age of new powerboat buyers decreased by almost two years compared to the same period last year. In fact, for the first time in a decade, the number of new boat buyers under 40 surpassed the number of buyers over 60. Our job now is to keep them coming back for more because, with all due respect to our cherished customers over 60, these younger buyers are our future.'

www.info-link.com

Axopar 37 XC Joins **RIB Shack Fleet**

Following on from the successful launch of the Axopar 28 Cabin last year, RIB Shack Marine are now planning to bring their first Axopar 37 XC Cross Cabin into their shared boat ownership scheme in January 2021. With five Axopar 28s already in the fleet, 'it is now time to go up another level,' said Colin Vine, director at RIB Shack.

All RIB Shack boats come fully spec'd and the Axopar 37 XC will be no different. They have gone for the gull-winged twin-cabin option as this will give their customers greater versatility. This boat will be configured with twin Mercury 300 V8 engines, with a view to offering enhanced performance in all conditions.

RIB Shack will be offering demonstrations to interested parties in October this year, and contact can be made via the form at **www.ribshackmarine.co.uk**

Cannes Cancelled

Despite a rigorous sanitary plan with numerous additional health and safety measures presented by the Cannes Yachting Festival and previously deemed 'satisfactory', the prefect of the Alpes-Maritimes decided not to grant the dispensation that would have allowed the Yachting Festival to go ahead, says a statement released by the organisers, who appear to have been blind-sided by the decision to cancel.

Three weeks ago, it continues, following a speech by Franck Riester, the French Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness, a decree confirmed that trade shows could be held from 1st September without a restriction on the number of visitors. Among other measures, the statement says, the Yachting Festival's health protocol stood out as being the first in France to receive APAVE 'Safe & Clean' certification. However, less than two weeks after the announcement by Minister Riester, the government suddenly reversed this decision and banned the holding of events of more than 5,000 people in France until 30th October 2020.

XOCEAN Use Torqeedo Propulsion Systems

XOCEAN are aiming to transform the way subsea data is collected. The company provides turnkey underwater data acquisition services with its growing fleet of unmanned surface vessels (USVs), which deliver a combination of safety, versatility, efficiency and productivity. And thanks to Torqeedo's electric propulsion systems, they are also nearly 100% emission-free.

XOCEAN's XO-450 USV is a custom-designed composite wave-piercing catamaran about the length of a typical automobile. The lightweight vessel is powered by a pair of Torqeedo Cruise 2.0 electric pod drives, with a Power 24-3500 lithium-ion battery and a lightweight micro-generator. Solar panels on deck provide efficient recharging during daylight hours.

The lightweight vessel is powered by a pair of Torqeedo Cruise 2.0 electric pod drives, with a Power 24-3500 lithium-ion battery and a lightweight micro-generator.

'Sustainability is a central value for us,' said XOCEAN CEO James Ives. 'Our USVs have a negligible carbon footprint, only producing about one-thousandth of the emissions of a conventional survey vessel. We are also employing offsets for all carbon produced in the delivery of our projects, resulting in fully carbon-neutral survey data for our customers.'

www.torqeedo.com / www.xocean.com

Deacons Used Boat Show

With the easing of lockdown restrictions and the recent fine weather, the demand for used boats has never been higher, and listing a boat at this year's Deacons Used Boat Show couldn't be easier. The show, organised by Why Boats international yacht brokers, takes place from 11th to 20th September in Bursledon, Southampton.

Why Boats director Ian Watkins stated: 'Listing your boat for the show is very simple - just give us a call and we'll do the rest. The £150 listing fee is really competitive and includes a whole host of benefits.'

Sellers will not only enjoy a discounted commission rate (5% plus VAT) but will receive a free lift, scrub and block off, as well as one month's free storage ashore followed by 25% off storage until 31st December 2020. Another washdown after the first month is also included.

The show will operate in a COVID-secure manner, and boats will be thoroughly sanitised each day. **More information can be found at www.whyboats.com**

NEMO Wins Red Dot Design Award

Dutch submersible manufacturer U-Boat Worx's new NEMO submarine has received a Red Dot Award for design excellence, as well as being recognised as 'best of the best' in the category 'Mobility and Transportation'. A global panel of experts assessed each of the 4,170 entries from 52 countries.

The NEMO is the smallest and lightest submersible ever produced. Built to explore the deep sea in air-conditioned comfort, it can safely dive up to 100 metres, allowing adventurers to explore hidden shipwrecks, search for new aquatic species or simply enjoy the underwater marine environment.

U-Boat Worx have an in-house team of highly experienced specialist engineers and technicians. Bert Houtman, founder and chairman of U-Boat Worx, remarked: 'Winning a Red Dot Design Award, as well as being awarded "best of the best" in its category, is a crowning achievement for our company. Our sub owners are not only the first to explore unseen sites, but they can do so in style.' **www.uboatworx.com**

Beneteau Launch Flyer 9

Beneteau's latest addition to their range of day boats is the Flyer 9, and Michaël Guinet, outboard product manager at Beneteau, remarked: 'The Flyer 9 embodies the spirit of the Beneteau day boat range. We have taken the recipe from the previous generation, erased its flaws and optimised its strengths. Staying true to the Flyer DNA, the new boat further optimises comfort and performance with a view to delivering total enjoyment on the water.'

The new craft is available in either SUNdeck or SPACEdeck variants, and full details on both can be found at **www.beneteau.com**

Fit It and Be Seen!

SOLAS, Chapter V, 19.2.7 states: 'All vessels must fit a radar reflector …' The importance of such is underscored when a boat suffers engine failure or is caught out in fog or sea mist. Nonetheless, laws are one thing, but the implementation of them is quite another.

Leading radar reflector manufacturer Echomax are helping to encourage more people to fit these life-protecting devices by making the installation of them all the more simple and uncomplicated. To this end, the company has developed its new Combo radar-reflector RTE brackets, which make the process of installation all the more straightforward.

The new product, with its range of fixings, is designed to suit all manner of craft and will not only accommodate various reflector types but also aerials and navigation lights. **See www.echomax.co.uk for further information**

Click&Boat Acquire Nautal

Boat rental company Click&Boat have acquired Nautal, their main European competitor. With the acquisition of the Spanish firm, Click&Boat have reinforced their international leadership, especially in the UK, with more than 360 boats being listed for rental in the UK by Nautal. The move will also see Click&Boat responsible for new, popular areas for boat rentals including Galway, County Leitrim, Cheshire and Lancashire.

The Click&Boat group now has 150 employees and connects a community of one million users around the world. Despite the current context, Click&Boat are consolidating the boat rental market, and the takeover of Nautal comes just four months after the acquisition of the German company Scansail.

Jeremy Bismuth, co-founder of Click&Boat, remarked: 'Click&Boat and Nautal share many values and commonalities. The acquisition of Nautal will allow us to reach a critical size promoting optimal quality of service. We are shaping the yachting of tomorrow together, making it accessible to as many people as possible.'
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WWW.SEARAY.COM

Genoa Boat Show
to Celebrate 60 Years

Preparations are well underway for the Genoa International Boat Show to present its 60th edition from 1st to 6th October this year.

Saverio Cecchi, president of I Saloni Nautici, commented: ‘We are working hard to present an event that will combine the highest standards of health and safety with an effective approach worthy of the “Made in Italy” brand and the world-class showcase that is the Genoa International Boat Show. A responsible and committed approach is the only way to truly respond to and acknowledge the level of trust companies have shown in us by registering for this year’s show. Despite recent events, requests for display space have been much greater than anticipated.’

Alongside the wide array of exhibitors, this year a brand-new area will be dedicated exclusively to Superboats. There will be a full roster for outboards as well, along with an already substantial number of equipment and service-related companies.

Information and tickets are available from the event’s official website at **www.salonenautico.com**

Simrad Support Open Arms Project

Simrad have announced a collaboration with the NGO Open Arms, a project dedicated to the surveillance and rescue of people in need of assistance in the Aegean and central Mediterranean.

In order to support Open Arms in developing their work at sea, Simrad have recently equipped their sailing boat Astral with the Halo24 pulse compression radar, NSS evo3 12 chartplotters and IS42 digital displays. In addition, their RIB Gomona has also been updated with a Simrad NSS evo3 7 chartplotter, VHF RS20S radio and AIS Class B NAIS 500 transponder.

Gerard Canals, Head of Operations at Open Arms, said: ‘The Open Arms ship fleet is equipped with the best technology, which is why we can navigate safely and can search for vessels in distress. Thanks to Simrad, we have been able to improve the Astral’s electronics equipment and some of the RIB’s.’

Pascual Román, Country Manager at Navico Iberia, commented: ‘We are proud to be able to help Open Arms save lives by equipping their vessels with advanced technology that allows them to carry out their mission with greater safety and efficiency.’

www.navico.com / www.openarms.es

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British Marine’s Boats 2020 event is scheduled to take place at Mayflower Park, Southampton from 11th to 20th September 2020, while MDL Marinas’ Ocean Village Boat Show goes ahead a short walk away. Boats 2020 will be an outdoor on-the-water event, billed as a not-for-profit showcase of boats and equipment.

Tim Mayer, MDL’s sales and marketing director, said: ‘MDL are delighted that, alongside their Ocean Village Boat Show, a version of British Marine’s Southampton International Boat Show has been given the go-ahead. This will help ensure the boating industry has a strong end to what has been one of the hardest starts to any boating season.’

MDL have been working with Southampton Council’s events team through the summer to make sure that everyone can relax in the knowledge that the show is being managed responsibly, with all guidance adhered to and safety measures in place.

www.mdlmarinas.co.uk
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Sebago Celebrate 50 Years of **Docksides**

To celebrate 50 years of their Docksides boating shoes, Sebago have produced a metal pin to be inserted sideways in their leather laces. The stars and stripes on one side to recall the origins of the brand and an etching celebrating the 50th anniversary on the other are the key features of this limited-edition tag, which comes free with the purchase of a pair of Sebago boat shoes.

Docksides were born in 1970 when Sebago created their 'boating moccasin' - a design inspired by the geography and sailing traditions of New England. During the 80s, in Italy, they became a feature in the wardrobes of the so-called 'paninari' - adolescents setting fashion trends in the main cities of the north - and during the 90s, seafaring competitions were associated with Docksides.

Today nothing has changed from the original Docksides, except their name. The design has become known as Portland Docksides, as a homage to the city in Maine where they first appeared along its docks.

www.sebago.co.uk

Fastnet world record

A new over-50ft class Cork to Fastnet Rock and back UIM World Powerboat Record was set in August by Safehaven Marine in their 23m-long XSV20 Thunder Child II.

The new record is 2 hours and 36 minutes, averaging 44.6 knots and recording a maximum speed of 53 knots on the run (subject to ratification by the Union Internationale Motonautique (UIM), the world governing body). The crew of skipper Frank Kowalski, Ciaran Monks, Carl Randalls, Mary Power and Robert Guzik took the boat on a recce trip in near-perfect conditions. The starting line was at Weaver's Point at the entrance to Cork Harbour, with the team setting off in light winds and only a long Atlantic groundswell to contend with.

It took the crew 1 hour and 21 minutes to reach Fastnet Rock, where a huge flotilla of 40-50 boats was waiting close by to watch as they passed. The crew said it was a little stressful navigating through the boats as they rounded the rock but that it was fabulous to see them all set chase after Thunder Child II as she headed home. They also commented on the great welcome they received once they had passed the Stags Rock and Kinsale Lighthouse and Thunder Child II literally thundered home to cross the finish line.

https://youtu.be/eUXQuitMsnQideo link

Friend of the Sea Launch Whale Shark-Watching Standard

Friend of the Sea have launched the first ever sustainable whale shark-watching standard. The standard enables people to observe and even swim with the world's largest fish without harming them or their habitats. It joins Friend of the Sea's standards for dolphin, whale and manta ray watching.

'There's a misconception that because whale sharks are so big, a comparatively tiny human being cannot harm them. Unfortunately, this is far from true,' said Paolo Bray, director of Friend of the Sea. 'Human activity can damage the whale shark's habitat and affect its health.'

Operators can apply confidentially to be accredited for the standard. The certification is voluntary and not mandatory to gain access to markets. The application process is not discriminatory based on the size, scale, management and minimum number of operators.

The application is available online at:
https://friendofthesea.org/marine-conservation-projects-and-awareness/whale-shark-watching/

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Yacht Show Paves the Way

This summer's 2020 British Motor Yacht Show made its mark as one of the UK's first boat shows to successfully go ahead post lockdown - with social distancing measures in place and a customer booking system to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all who attended.

The show, which took place at Swanwick Marina, was backed by top British luxury motor yacht brands including Fairline, Sunseeker and Princess, and this year's event also welcomed a number of high-profile overseas brands.

Fairline MD Richard Bates was impressed with the outcome: 'This year's show has been the best we have ever experienced in the seven years the British Motor Yacht Show has been running. The business generated from the show has been remarkable.'

> **'This year's show has been the best we have ever experienced in the seven years the British Motor Yacht Show has been running.**

And Roger Lipman of Princess Motor Yacht Sales commented: 'Although the visitor numbers were down from more normal times, those who did attend were able to view all the yachts in a safe and relaxed environment, and we achieved unexpectedly high sales.'

www.britishmotoryachtshow.com

Dromeas to Increase **D28** Range

Dromeas Yachts have announced the launch of two new cabin versions of their D28 high-performance series for delivery in early 2021. The all-new D28 SUV and WA are both based on the powerful twin-stepped deep-V offshore performance hull designed by Adam Younger, with single- and twin-engine installations capable of speeds of 50+ knots and efficient cruise capabilities at 30+ knots in rough weather. Focused on durability, Dromeas are building every part with foam-cored sandwich fibreglass in single-shot vacuum infusion without using polyester and wood in structural elements.

Thanks to their modular smart design, both the D28 WA and SUV models have a variety of possible layouts, with all models coming standard with a forward cabin accommodating two people, foredeck sunbed, separate head, dive door and spacious deck.

Full details can be found at www.dromeasyachts.com

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Boats.co.uk Announced as **Kawasaki Distributor**

Boats.co.uk have announced an agreement with Kawasaki to become the exclusive UK distributor of their new personal watercraft (PWC) range. After a six-year absence from the UK market, the appointment follows Kawasaki's plans to reinforce their position at the centre of the recreational and extreme personal watercraft scene.

As UK distributor, Boats.co.uk, trading under the title Kawasaki Watercraft UK, will introduce Kawasaki's new 2021 Jet Ski fleet, comprising multi-seat models and Kawasaki's latest-version 'stand-up' Jet Ski, the SX-R.

James Barke, managing director of Boats.co.uk, commented: 'Kawasaki Jet Skis are the original personal watercraft and we are very proud to be representing this highly trusted brand in the UK.'

General manager of Kawasaki Motors UK Howard Dale said: 'The PWC market has become very specialised, so we took the view that in order to fully exploit Kawasaki's market potential, we needed to work with experts, and we are confident that Boats.co.uk are the right partner for us.'

Please see websites:
www.kawasakiwatercraft.co.uk
www.boats.co.uk

Premier Offer Winter Berthing Savings

Premier Marinas are offering boat owners savings on secure winter berthing at eight (Eastbourne, Brighton, Chichester, Southsea, Gosport, Port Solent, Swanwick and Falmouth) of the group's nine south coast marinas, including a choice of two special winter berthing offers and seasonal boatyard discounts. Berthing prices start from £189 per month for boats up to 8m, with 10m berths on offer from £221 per month.

The company's discounted six-month winter berthing package is available for boats between 6.5m and 18m and runs from 1st October 2020 to 31st March 2021. This package includes 28 days' complimentary storage ashore.

For boat owners who prefer more flexibility, Premier are offering monthly winter berthing for boats up to 18m from 1st November 2020 to 31st March 2021 – with a minimum stay of one month. After the first month's berthing, customers can opt to extend their stay on a monthly basis to a maximum of five months.

For further information, terms and conditions or a quote visit www.premiermarinas.com.

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SeaDek and Chaparral Ink Logo Usage Deal

Building upon a partnership that spans more than a decade, SeaDek Marine Products and Chaparral Boats have finalised an agreement making the official Chaparral logos available on custom aftermarket SeaDek kits. While SeaDek non-skid products have come factory installed on many new Chaparral models for years, owners of late-model Chaparrals or those looking to add additional SeaDek flooring to newer boats now have the option to show their brand loyalty by including the iconic Chaparral marks.

'We have long valued our enduring partnership with Chaparral,' said Jason Gardner, SeaDek Vice-President of Marketing. 'We both share the common goal of providing a uniquely personal boating experience for our customers, and this new initiative is one more way for us to deliver on that promise.'

Custom SeaDek kits featuring the Chaparral logo will be available through the SeaDek factory, as well as from their network of certified fabricators and installers.

www.seadekpro.co.uk

THE OCEAN VILLAGE BOAT SHOW
MDL MARINAS

MDL Release Boat Show Details

MDL Marinas have confirmed that their new boat show, to be hosted at their flagship marina in Southampton, will be called the Ocean Village Boat Show and will take place from 11th to 20th September 2020. This is the newest boat show in the MDL Marinas line-up, which also includes events in Plymouth and the Thames Valley. Visitors to the show will be able to view over 80 models across 30 different power and sail brands.

'We're extremely pleased with the positive response from the boat dealers and brokers,' says Tim Mayer, MDL's sales and marketing director. 'Already having a firm commitment from 30 brands at this stage is really great, showing there is certainly a desire to showcase new boats in an on-water format.'

Tickets for the show are available online via the MDL Marinas website and entry will be free, although only those pre-registered for tickets will be able to gain access to the show.

www.mdlmarinas.co.uk

Leadership Changes at Gemini Marine

Gemini have announced that a management buy-out is in the final stages of being concluded. Gerhard Neethling, the current global sales and marketing manager, and Juan Oberholzer, Gemini's current general manager, will be taking over the reins, with the former assuming the position of CEO and the latter becoming the company COO.

Gerhard Neethling has more than 13 years' experience at Gemini. In that time, he has built strong relationships with the dealer network and other key customers, both local and overseas. Juan Oberholzer, being a highly experienced chartered accountant with 15 years of experience across a number of industries, offers strong financial modelling and control with particular focus on the structures and processes that are critical to success in these uncertain business times.

Handing over the reins are Jeff Stephens, Graham Symmonds and Henning Blaauw, who have spent a combined 101 years at Gemini Marine, and to ensure continuity, a fully planned and phased transition is underway.

For more information visit www.gemini-marine.com

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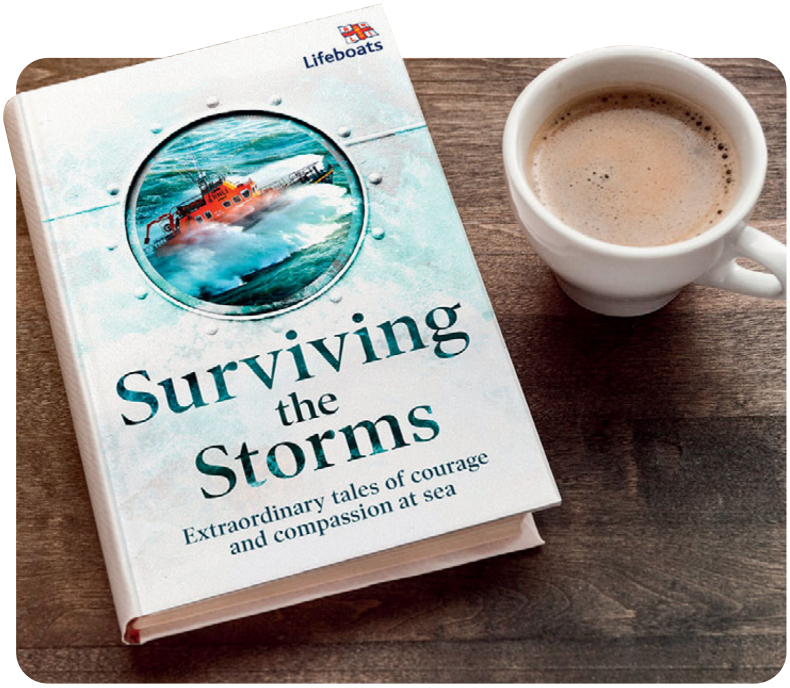

New Book Showcases RNLI Rescues

Surviving the Storms is a new book presenting a collection of 11 first-hand accounts of some of the most dramatic rescues carried out by RNLI lifesavers around the UK and Ireland over the past 20 years. These are stories of extraordinary courage and compassion at sea, providing a rare insight into the life-or-death decisions the RNLI's lifesavers have to make when battling the forces of nature and saving lives. Royalties from all sales will be used to support the lifesaving charity.

RNLI chief executive Mark Dowie said: 'Surviving the Storms is a wonderful account of selflessness and bravery. We have hundreds of lifeboat stations and thousands of crewmembers and lifeguards all dedicated to saving lives. Between them, they've helped so many people survive the storms and I'm proud of every one of them.'

Copies can be ordered online from **Amazon** and **Waterstones** and at **https://books.harpercollins.co.uk/surviving-the-storms/**. The book is due to be stocked at supermarkets and independent bookshops and is also available on **Kindle**, **Apple Books** and as an **audio book**.

Million-Pound Boost for Oyster Population

International conservation charity ZSL (Zoological Society of London), along with partners Blue Marine Foundation (BLUE) and British Marine, celebrated a win for wildlife on World Oyster Day (5 August) after they received an award of £1,180,000 to boost British native oyster populations – the biggest project of its kind in the UK.

The funding has been raised by players of the People's Postcode Lottery and awarded as part of the Dream Fund, which gives charities the opportunity to bring a dream project to life. It will help the 'Wild Oysters' project to recover the hugely depleted native oyster populations, which will in turn see cleaner water, healthier fisheries and plentiful marine biodiversity in Britain.

ZSL Senior Conservation Programme Manager Alison Debney said: 'Despite their small size, oysters are capable of making huge changes in our marine environment. Our dream is to grow a self-sustaining population of native oysters in the UK. This funding means we now have the potential to release nine billion native oyster larvae into the ocean, creating oyster nurseries in UK waters.'

For more information visit www.zsl.org

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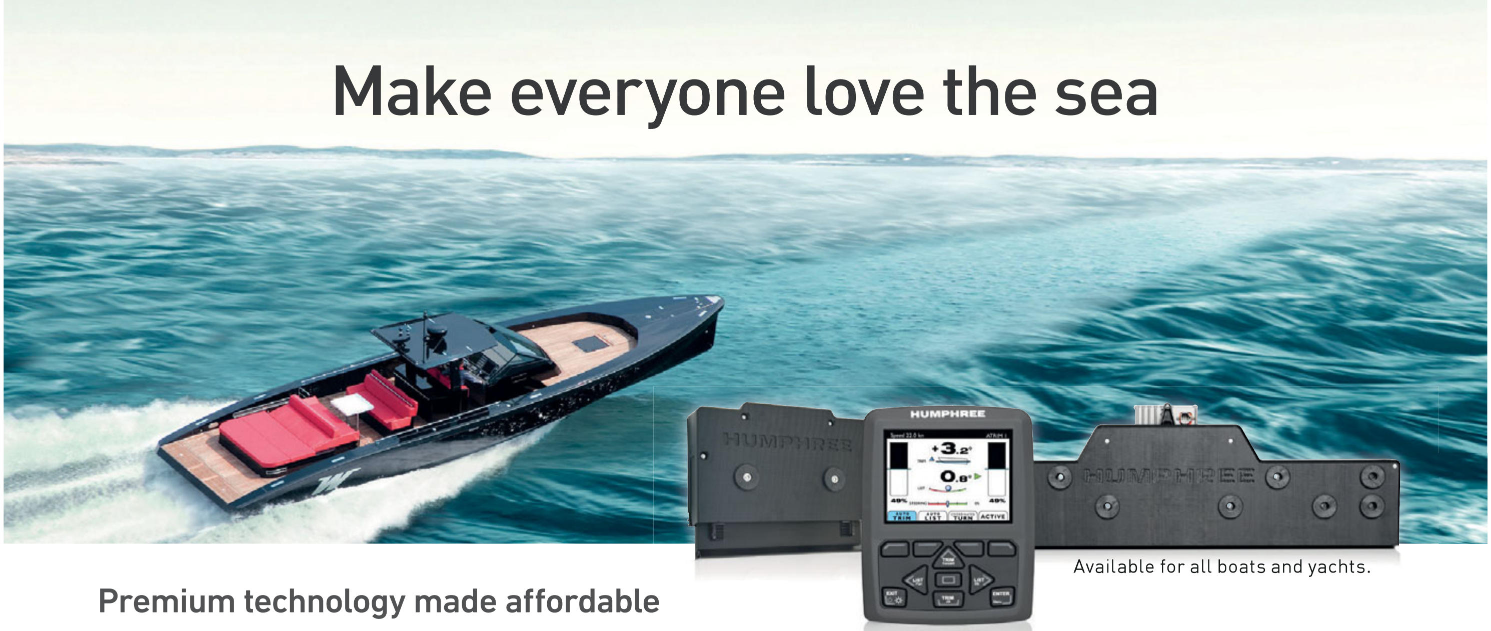

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New Suzuki Outboards

New Suzuki DF115BG and DF140BG outboards are first in class to offer drive by wire.

1. Sharing the same block, the slim in-line 4-cylinder profile is the same for both engines. 2. Both engines come in long and extra-long shaft versions. 3. Note the new cowling air scoops, which have an effective water separation system, enabling any water to drain off.

Suzuki's new DF115BG and DF140BG 4-stroke outboards are the first in their class to offer all the advantages of drive-by-wire technology. By bringing their proven drive-by-wire technology (known as Suzuki Precision Control) to their new 115hp and 140hp in-line 4-cylinder motors, Suzuki are helping to simplify the rigging process for boatbuilders. The reliability and precise control of Suzuki's drive-by-wire technology have established themselves well on Suzuki's larger-horsepower models (150–350 hp), but the enhancements to Suzuki's new DF115BG and DF140BG go beyond just the plug-and-play integration of electronic drive-by-wire technology.

An upgraded compression ratio of 10.6:1 helps these new 2L outboards achieve better top speed and acceleration by improving 'thermal efficiency'. Fuel efficiency has also been increased compared to Suzuki's existing DF115A and DF140A models. Factory testing has demonstrated as much as 5-7 % better fuel efficiency for the DF140BG across mid-range to high-end cruising speeds. The new DF115BG has produced up to 5-6 % better fuel efficiency at like cruising speeds. These claims are not unreasonable given that a compression ratio increase generally improves torque and fuel efficiency, which in conjunction with this company's effective Lean Burn fuel control technology should pay dividends.

Along with delivering silky smooth shifting, instant throttle response and more mid-range grunt for less fuel, other improvements include a 40A alternator on both models. This bigger alternator delivers improved output at low idle speeds - a feature we are seeing increasingly now, and ideal for craft with lots of electronics, such as today's power-hungry fishing boats, which spend a lot of time trolling.

While much has changed under the cowling, some enhancements to the new DF115BG and DF140BG are obvious to the eye. They both feature a sportier, streamlined exterior design. And the redesigned cowling isn't just for looks. It also incorporates a new air intake structure with improved water separation and a silencer-resonator system to attenuate engine sounds and provide a pleasant boating experience at all engine speeds. This concept was first used on the DF350 and from my experience seemed to work well; in particular, the engine above 4500rpm has a pleasant sporting tone.

To make routine maintenance easier, Suzuki have made it possible to replace the oil filter simply by removing the upper engine cover. This seems an obviously logical feature; however, it has taken a while for outboard manufacturers to catch on to the fact that skippers that frequently use their boats may want to change the oil and filter while the boat is still afloat – which this feature enables. A new 'oil spill catcher' surrounding the oil filter mount allows the filter to be changed without making a mess or contaminating the water. Also, an easy-access water detection fuel filter has been added to these engines to help protect them against contaminated fuel. Again, this is a sensible feature that is permeating down from bigger motors.

With 508mm (L) and 635mm (X) shaft lengths available, the new DF115BG and DF140BG outboards are an ideal power choice for a wide range of boats. Both outboards boast new graphics and are available in Suzuki's Pearl Nebular Black colour.

The DF115BG and DF140BG will be available for order from the end of the year.

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www.marine.suzuki.co.uk

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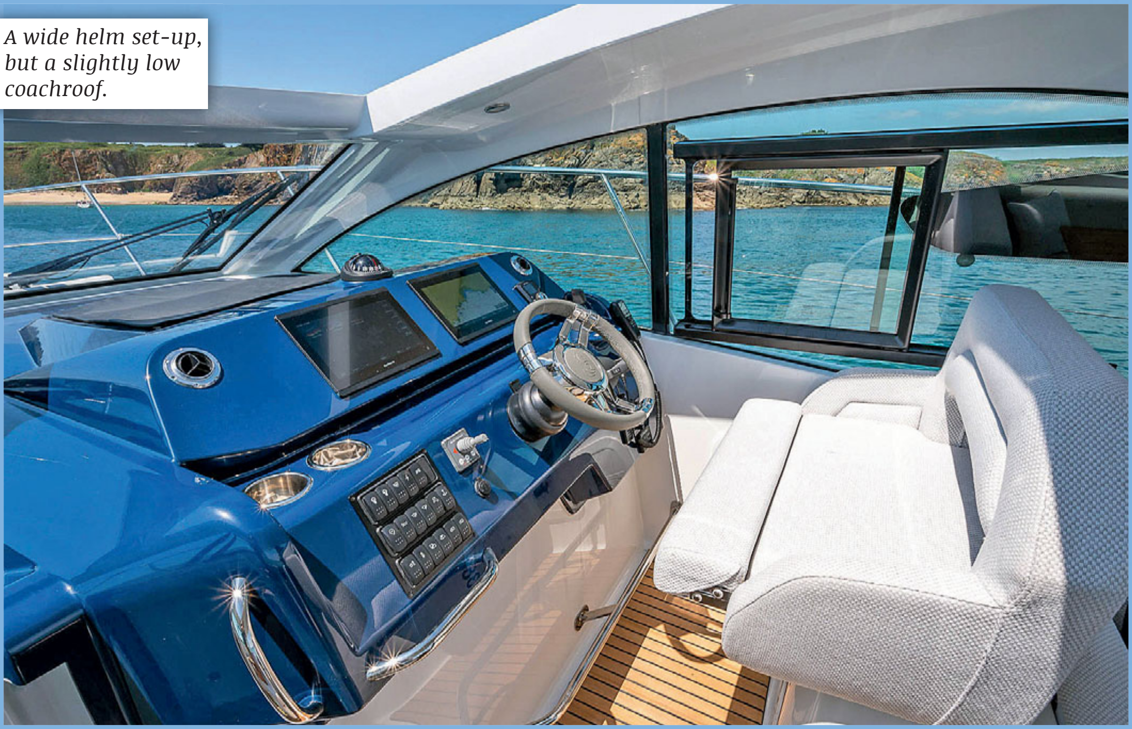
The new Grand Turismo 36 from Beneteau is a boat that I suspect will attract a wide range of buyers. I base this assumption on the fact that with the GT36, Beneteau have built a boat that at a glance does not look typically Gallic. This is not to imply that anything French is less than appealing to the eye, but the sleek coachroof combined with sensibly tall 'Antares-like' guard rails and a blunt bow are definitely different. It sends a message of style, space and practicality - not a bad combination for any sports cruiser.

As is becoming more common today, the Gran Turismo 36 will be available with sterndrive and outboard engines. The sterndrive diesel engine choices are 2 x 270hp or 2 x 300hp, both Volvo, so we can expect these to be D4s with duo-prop sterndrives. The outboard engine choices are 2 x 300hp or 2 x 350hp, and though the brand is yet to be confirmed, based on previous form these are likely to be V8 Yamaha F300s and F350s.

With an electric sunroof, the whole upper deck area is bathed in natural light.

The sterndrive GT36 will be launched ahead of the outboard model, but the lower cost of this version and the silky-smooth power delivery of petrol engines, especially V8s, will likely have some people waiting for it. Depending on engine choices, she will reach top speeds of 30-35 knots, with little in terms of top speed between the 300hp D4 boat and one driven by F350s. Nothing has been said as to how the space otherwise occupied by two D4s will be used on the outboard-powered boat. We can suppose that it will probably provide a big storage compartment - ideal for things like roll-up tenders and water sports toys.

The helm is served by a wide double seat, which, though accommodating when seated, I suspect may prove cramped if you stand. The sleek, sloping coachroof is low over the forward section of the helm. Consequently, having the sunroof open will most likely be



A wide helm set-up, but a slightly low coachroof.

the only option if you want to drive or berth standing. In hot weather this will be great, especially as the forward-sloping roof line will channel air into the wheelhouse at speed. The dash allows up to two 12in Garmin MFDs, with room for quite a few more instruments should you want them. Next to the helm sits a double seat on the port side, so four can face forward on passage.

With an electric sunroof, the whole upper deck area is bathed in natural light. Behind the helm is a spacious cockpit area, the aft seat of which converts to a headrest for the sun pad. Beneath this sits a large stowage compartment. Opposite there is a wet bar/galley, which is ideal for those craving the sun, bathing or indulging in water sports, while keeping the BBQ away from the main seating area.

Although this is a hardtop boat, the aft area is open, and the only way to enclose it is with an aft cover, which one can suppose is supplied as standard fitment. This does give you that open-boat feel, especially with the open sunroof creating an air scoop effect. At the same time, you have quick weather and sun protection from the hardtop when needed. However, in our UK climate, you will just have to be mindful of being able to quickly fit that aft 'camper cover' as and when needed.

... there is a wet bar/ galley, which is ideal for those craving the sun, bathing or indulging in water sports, while keeping the BBQ away from the main seating area.

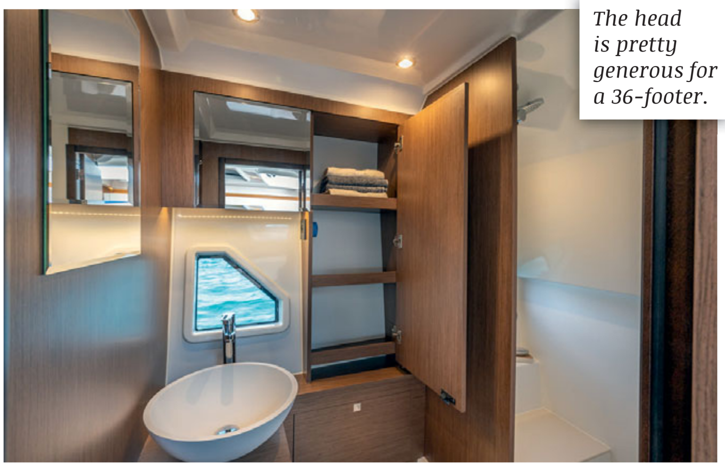
The designers have not forgotten the need to go forward without feeling you are taking your life in your hands. Though the side decks are hardly 'Grand Banks', they are wide enough to comfortably walk down and are topped by very tall

1. The saloon is a cosy affair. 2. Storage flanks the master cabin. 3. The master cabin enjoys plenty of natural light.

guard rails. Beneteau have taken these rails from the design of the Antares 12 and 1380, and though they might look slightly out of style with a sports cruiser, the safety they provide can't be ignored. You could argue for slightly wider side decks, but this would take away from the large social area. The foredeck has an inset double sunbed either side of the forward escape hatch, the design of which provides a degree of security while underway.

Below decks, the craft benefits from an expansive window line, which, running down three-quarters of the hull, feeds the mid cabin, saloon and master forepeak cabin with plenty of light. It is a case of deciding which cabin to take, as to be fair, the guest mid cabin is a close rival to the master cabin. The bed is bigger in the mid cabin and converts to two single berths, but you only just get standing headroom in the doorway. The master cabin has standing headroom either side of the foot of the bed, as well as lockers flanking this area. On top of this, the bed hinges up to reveal an easily accessed vast storage space beneath. Like many sports cruisers, below decks there is a degree of compromise, in this case the saloon, as there is a separate forepeak cabin rather than a convertible dinette area, and hence the saloon is short. In reality, only a couple would be happy spending any amount of time down here, sitting around a small table that faces a compact galley on the starboard side. The head compartment is good, with full standing headroom and a separate shower unit. The galley houses a two-ring ceramic hob, inset sink, 60L fridge and some storage. Combined with the wet bar, this boat actually offers reasonable catering facilities when you consider that few want to cook Sunday lunch aboard a 36ft boat.

The Beneteau Grand Turismo 36 is built for maximum appeal. It packs in a mass of features, a healthy dose of space and light and two contrasting propulsion systems, and I suspect it will have a relatively competitive price tag when it arrives in our waters.■



The head is pretty generous for a 36-footer.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 11.56m (37ft 11in)
Beam: 3.51m (11ft 7in)
Draught: 1.09m (3ft 7in)
Displacement: 7276kg (dry with sterndrives)
Fuel capacity: 816L (2 x 90 gal)
Water capacity: 150L (33 gal)
Engine options: Twin Volvo 270hp/300hp D4s on DPH sterndrives or twin 300hp/350hp outboards – likely to be Yamaha

CONTACT

www.beneteau.com

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JEANNEAU CAP CAMARAT 12.5 WA

A tough all-weather fast fisher that combines practicality, style and performance in healthy measures.

Last year I had the pleasure of testing the flagship of the Cap Camarat range. The twin F350 Yamaha-powered Cap Camarat 10.5 WA was simply great fun for shouldering aside the rolling residual swell of the Eastern Solent at 35 knots. However, with the arrival of the 12.5 WA, this highly capable boat has been upstaged, as the high-octane fast fisher market has a new contender.

Like the 10.5, the 12.5 WA is also designed by Mike Peters, a man renowned for his capable high-performance deep-vee hulls. For whatever reason, this new boat is not stepped, unlike the twin-stepped 10.5 WA. The hull is deep-vee and has the same flared hull design, whose tall topsides, no doubt, will be no less effective at keeping the sea out of the boat. Performance will likely be slightly less than its smaller sibling, which is capable of 47 knots. Fifty knots is the figure given by Jeanneau for the 12.5. However, based on the assumption that this boat will be rigged with either twin Yamaha XTO 425s or triple Yamaha F300s, its power-to-weight ratio will be lower than that of the 10.5 WA, so I suspect 44–45 is a realistic top speed for this set-up. Yamahas are shown

The 12.5 WA is also designed by Mike Peters, a man renowned for his capable high-performance deep-vee hulls.

Well appointed and with a large separate shower, the bathroom is impressive.

LEFT: This spacious tri-berth under-sole mid cabin has loads of storage.

A wide beam and standing headroom between the galley and head make the saloon more than a weekend hideaway.

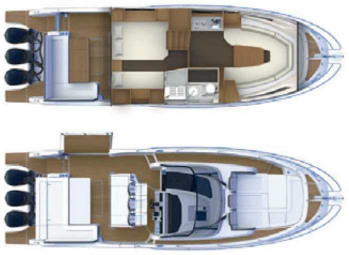
> **The helm, set asymmetrically to starboard, has triple seats with the driver's position central.**

fitted and they have been standard fitment in the past, but as this boat is rated for twin 450hp engines, is Mercury's new supercharged 450R Verado going to be put on the options list?

This boat has a T-top, which, as with the 10.5 WA, is an extra that costs between £5,000 and £6,000. From my experience, this would be money well spent. Sitting on an aluminium frame, the GRP T-top roof houses a sunroof with a quick-release bar that you can open one-handed from the helm. It comes with a close-down kit, consisting of covers that roll down and zip up quickly, enabling you to turn the boat into an ad hoc coupé in a moment. Flush LED lights sit in the roof lining, and a searchlight is mounted on the roof. The cockpit is superb, with the 12.5 enjoying that recently trending design feature of a folding bulwark that turns into a bathing platform. The wet bar is gigantic and faced with extensive deep seating. The helm, set asymmetrically to starboard, has triple seats with the driver's position central. This design allows for a wide port side deck leading to the ingeniously designed foredeck area, comprising a fold-out table and a triple sunbed.

You could easily consider this to be a big cuddy boat. However, the moment you descend the companionway steps this concept disappears, as the depth of

Light upholstery and dark wood always go well together.



the forward cabin hints that accommodation sits below the cockpit sole. This under-sole cabin is not only generous in the bed department – a double and a single - but it also has a lot of storage. The forward dinette can, of course, provide extra sleeping space if need be with the table dropped down to provide an infill. There is plenty of headroom around the galley area and in the head/shower compartment - two places where you need to stand properly. Though it has a 60L fridge, the galley is a compact set-up, which with the cockpit wet bar is no hardship. The large head/shower area, like the galley, has teak veneer joinery fitted to a high standard, with the shower/toilet section separated by a glass door.

How many of these big petrol-powered fast fishers we will see in the UK only time will tell, but hopefully one will come our way at some point.■

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 11.95m (39ft 02in)
Beam: 3.58m (11ft 8in)
Draught: 1.09m (3ft 7in)
Displacement: 5860kg (dry without engines)
Fuel capacity: 1100L (242 gal)
Water capacity: 200L (44 gal)
Engine options: 2 x 450hp or 3 x 300hp outboards
CE rating: B for 11

PRICE

A realistic price for the T-Top version with basic electronics, triple 300hp Yamaha outboards, including VAT and commissioning, according to Jeanneau dealers Blackrock Yachting, would be £306,478.

CONTACT

www.jeanneau.com
www.blackcrockyachting.co.uk

The cockpit has a massive social dimension.

1: One of the many configurations this bike can come in. 2: Super light Carbon fibre wheels. 3: Single piece carbon fibre construction allows for minimalistic construction.

World's First Custom 3D-Printed Unibody Carbon Fibre E-Bike

The 'Stealth e-bike' is a great addition to a cabin boat for exploring one's destination when cruising.

Contact: www.superstrata.bike

It would be fair to say that bicycles do not often get featured in boating magazines. However, boat-related accessories and toys often do. This is where Superstrada come in. This Californian company has just launched two 'very serious' bikes, both perfect as portable stowaway transport. They both have very serious price tags too, but considering their potential when you arrive in some small French harbour with a hungry crew and the nearest boulangerie 3 miles away, you may see where I am coming from.

Superstrada have launched the world's first 3D-printed unibody bicycle. On top of this, it is also the world's first made-to-measure 3D-printed e-bicycle and has an impact-resistant unibody carbon fibre frame. I am no cyclist but am aware that carbon fibre bikes can shatter from heavy impact, which a one-piece unibody construction is far less likely to suffer. How does this relate to panting away in the saddle to buy some wine and provisions? Well, as you probably know, as well as being very strong, carbon fibre is very light, and in the case of Superstrada's Terra version, this bike is stated to weigh less than two water bottles – about 1.3kg - and with wheels it weighs 7.5kg.

Impressively superlight though this bike is, I was still not fully convinced about stashing one in the lazarette, until I saw its sibling. The Ion e-bicycle is exactly that, though you would not realise it to look at it. The battery is concealed within the forward down tube, with a motor hidden within the construction around the pedal crank. It looks like a very futuristic bicycle, nothing more, and it weighs 11kg. The e-bike aims to mainly provide pedal assistance, so you won't be able to put your feet up and belt along at 20mph all day, but you can cover some miles at a healthy pace with little real effort. Its assisted top speed from the combination of pedalling and its 250W motor is 20mph. The only likely giveaway would be that your speed does not match your exertions. It can be fully charged in two hours, providing up to a 55-mile range. Both the Terra and the Ion will feature integrated data and power wiring throughout the frame, enabling a variety of electronic upgrades and extras.

Both models are 3D-printed in a single continuous pass of a carbon fibre thermoplastic composite. They are also constructed using next-generation thermoplastic materials, making them extremely impact resistant. The frame can be tailored to a rider's height, weight, arm/leg length, riding position and even preferred stiffness levels. With over 500,000 possible combinations, they are possibly the most versatile carbon bikes ever made. Additional options include different riding styles (racing, street, gravel or touring), wheel materials (metal or carbon fibre) and colours (white or black - at the moment).

The **Terra Bicycle** normally retails for **£2,599** and the **Ion E-Bicycle** for **£3699**. **Early bird prices** are **Terra £1,420** and **Ion £1,895**. Both are available for **pre-order now**. Shipping from the US begins in December 2020.

With over 500,000 possible combinations, they are possibly the most versatile carbon bikes ever made.

White and black works well.

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NEW PWC FROM YAMAHA

The SuperJet is a lively drive.

From the simple jet ski concept to a 'marinised missile', Yamaha's new fleet of PWC show no compromise.

SuperJet Series

Due for launch next year, Yamaha's new stand-up SuperJet aims to keep a lead on the competition. Its punchy 4-stroke engine and brand-new sleek lightweight hull have been designed for extreme straight-line performance, and an ability to cut aggressive corners. Powered by Yamaha's successful lightweight, 3-cylinder, 4-stroke TR-1 1049cc marine engine, this revamped power plant is claimed to be smoother than ever before.

Its stability is the product of a new wider and more stable hull, so it's now ideal for recreational as well as competition use. The spring-assisted steering pole and handlebar will induce the rider to take a comfortable lean-forward position - the perfect stance for fast riding and turning. This new set-up features a three-position adjustable spring-assisted handle pole that can extend up to 50mm in length, together with 'race-inspired handlebars' and a wide padded foot tray with an integrated reboarding grip section. For the newcomer, L-MODE reduces engine performance to around 35 knots. Feeding the engine is a larger 5-gallon fuel tank that delivers plenty of range for the rider who wants to explore further, and there is an easy-to-read low-fuel meter placed conspicuously on the deck. It easily fits into the back of a light van or large SUV, and its light weight makes it simple to launch and recover, as well as facilitating deck storage on a motor yacht.

Yamaha have stated that the SuperJet is no longer restricted to competition use on the racing circuit. It now features a hyper-flow 144mm jet pump and adjustable nozzle, with a 'race-inspired' top-loader intake grate, a special impeller, and an automatic bilge water pump and control system. The new SuperJet is available in white to reinforce its minimalistic design.

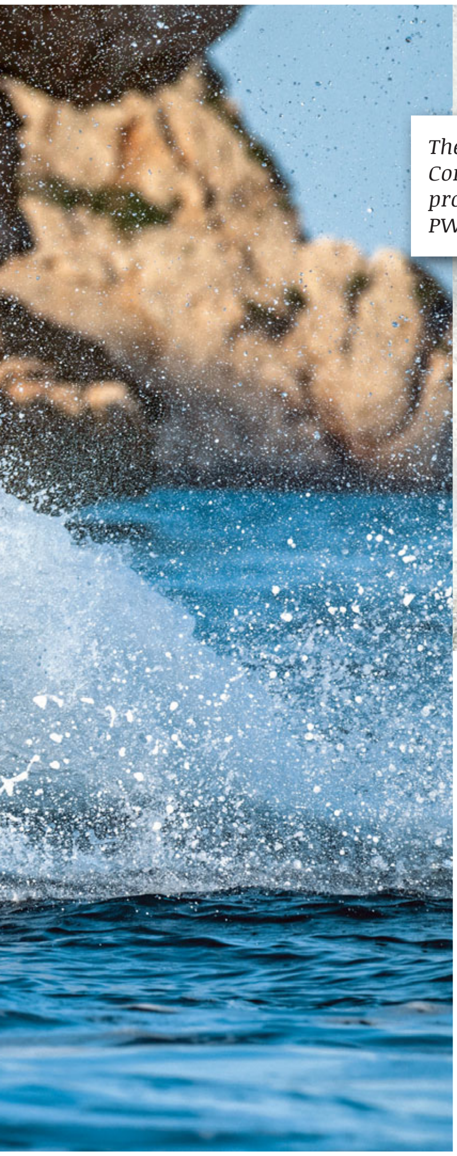
Yamaha have stated that the SuperJet is no longer restricted to competition use on the racing circuit.

The SuperJet is light and compact and can be stored on deck.

FX Series

The FX series already enjoys a reputation for its advanced engineering and dependable handling, aspects that have now been further enhanced with the 2021 range. Renowned for being exceedingly smooth, and arguably the quietest and most powerful three-seat touring jet skis, they offer a degree of comfort few would expect on this type of craft.

The supercharged 1812cc



The GP1800R with Cornering Control provides a unique PWC experience.

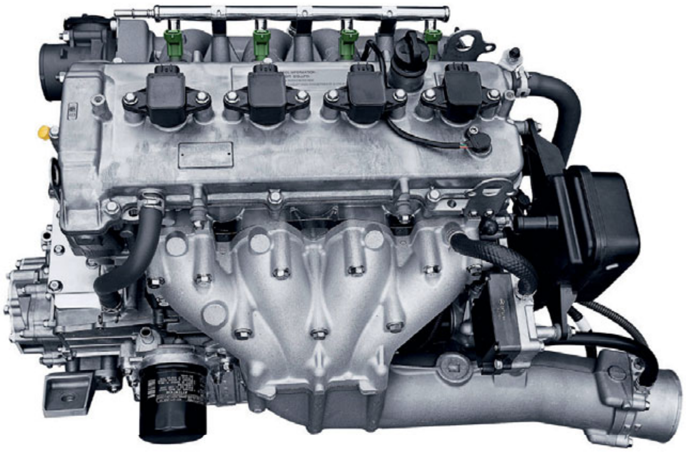
SVHO engine is the largest and most powerful engine in any WaveRunner. When partnered with the lightweight NanoXcel 2 hull and body, it provides a smooth power delivery, coupled with stable and agile handling. Cutting-edge technology in the form of an intuitive RiDE control system, electronic Trim and Reverse, Cruise Assist and a remote-control security system take the PWC concept to a new level. The Cruiser versions are the true flagships of the entire WaveRunner line-up, offering added touches like pop-up cleats. With their revolutionary RiDE systems and lightweight hulls, these versatile all-rounders deliver high levels of performance and handling, making them ideal for adventurous touring or enthusiastic sports riding. Although not supercharged, the same 1812cc engine block is used for the naturally aspirated high-output engine in the FX HO model. It features a high-pressure fuel pump and an intelligent electronic throttle control system, delivering smooth, powerful, economical performance. Like its Cruiser sibling, it has No Wake Mode and Cruise Assist, with luxury seating for three, a large swim platform, an extra deep reboarding step, dual grab handles and plenty of storage space.

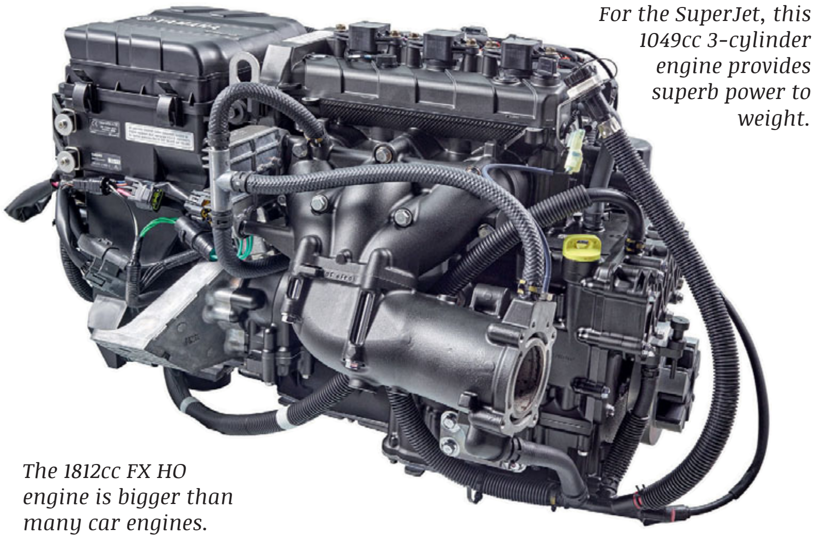
GP Series

The supercharged Yamaha GP1800R SVHO and normally aspirated GP1800R HO are the new top-of-the-range extreme high-performance models. Featuring Launch and Cornering Control for 2021, these models will be very exciting to drive. Cornering Control automatically shifts the trim into the bow-down position when decelerating for tighter cornering. After cornering, the system automatically returns to the original setting. Launch Control automatically shifts the trim down to prevent bow rise when accelerating hard. Race-inspired features like a redesigned intake grate and upgraded jet pump provide for better hook-up and quicker acceleration. Also new is the redesigned hull liner, which moves the fuel tank 80mm towards the stern, and 15mm lower in the hull. By repositioning the weight of the fuel tank, the craft’s new centre of gravity enhances the GP’s handling. **Pricing and further details on all PWC to be announced soon.**

The supercharged GP1800R SVHO.

Contact
www.yamaha-motor.eu





For the SuperJet, this 1049cc 3-cylinder engine provides superb power to weight.

The 1812cc FX HO engine is bigger than many car engines.

Boat Lift

Your own dry stack berth, even in the most remote location.

Being able to keep your boat high and dry for most boaters is often no more than a pipe dream. Dry stacking is generally the only way this can be realised, and it still has its limitations. For those in 'off-piste', notably private locations, staying afloat most of the year is a fact of life. However, the Elevator Lift from Golden Manufacturing offers the concept of boat lift luxury to those far-flung places.

In particular, waterfront locations that can't accommodate piles due to a soft bottom are perfect for the 'bolt-on concept' of the Elevator Lift. Installed on a pier, sea wall, natural embankment or canal, it can hold any boat up to an impressive limit of 27 tonnes. Each Lift is made for a specific boat and installation, whether it's a 15m offshore powerboat or a PWC. Using the Golden Elevator Lift couldn't be easier. Employing heavy-duty guide post bumpers, the boat is driven onto the Lift. The hull is gently cradled in the carpeted wood or aluminium bunks as it rises from the water. Then it's simply a matter of stepping from the boat onto the shore. Launching is claimed to be even easier.

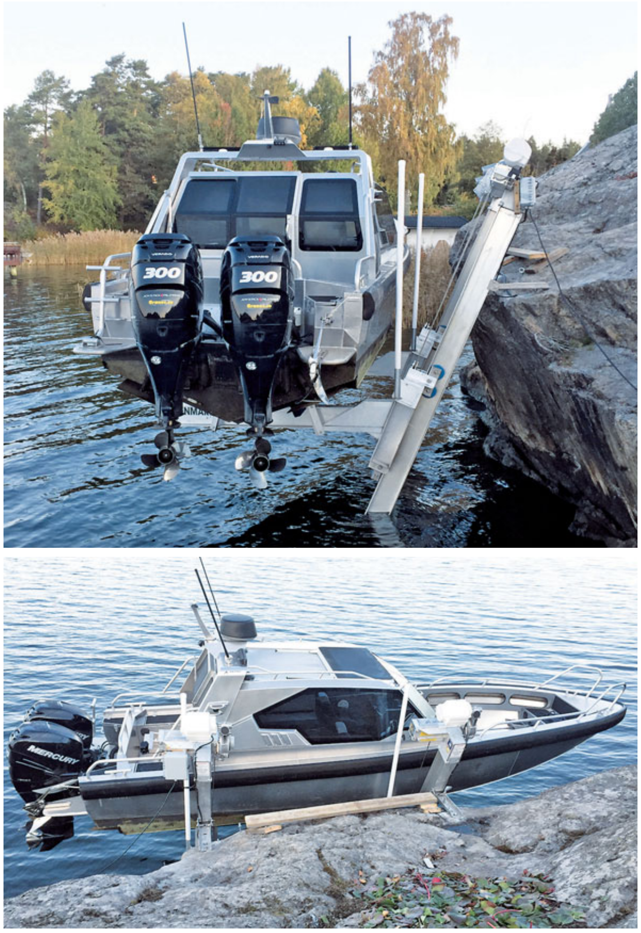
Each Lift is made for a specific boat and installation, whether it's a 15m offshore powerboat or a PWC.

Built in the USA using only the highest marine-grade 6061-T6 welded aluminium and stainless steel, Golden Elevator Lifts are engineered for conditions that regularly see heavy weather, including ice. A rugged box construction mates the drive connection and track beam. Large 8.9cm solid aluminium winders coupled with 12 Nylatron wheels on equaliser brackets ensure cable longevity, and smooth operation on models built for craft over 4500kg. The muscle behind the Elevator Lift is the overengineered high-torque Golden Sea-Drive. In over 75,000 units manufactured, it is claimed to have a 100% reliability record, which is important when holding a 27-tonne boat 3m off the side of a sea wall.

Golden Manufacturing are a substantial manufacturer in boat lifts, and the only such company to hold ISO 9001:2015 certification. Winner of various marine industry awards, they manufacture a wide range of lifts that accommodate vessels up to 108,800kg.

The muscle behind the Elevator Lift is the overengineered high-torque Golden Sea-Drive.

Contact **www.goldenboatlifts.com**



Its ability to operate pretty much anywhere has made it ideal for far-flung Scandinavian locations.

Sunseeker's New On-board Filtering System

Green and clean - Sunseeker look to set a standard in on-board fresh water.

www.waveinternational.co.uk

Every Sunseeker is now offered with a range of filter systems from Wave International, either as standard or, on the smaller models, as an option. The majority are fitted with Flostream HiFlo10 drinking water filters to galleys and wet bars, and the standard model Flostream unit to ice makers. All boats built to the CE standard feature Wavestream System 2 bilge filter systems.

Wave International filter systems ensure high-quality, clean, bacteria-free fresh water on board. They also make sure that no oil, dirty water, chemicals, microplastics or other contaminants end up in the bilge and thus being pumped overboard. These easy-to-install cartridge filter systems enable the removal of all traces of dirt, oil, contaminants or chemicals.

Sunseeker were one of the first production boatbuilders to choose to fit Wave International's filters on their new-build craft, working closely with Wave's UK distributor Halyard (M&I) Ltd to build the filters into their production models. In addition to all of Sunseeker's new boats being available with these systems, existing boat owners are able to have Wave filter systems retrofitted. These filters are compact, easy to install and simple to replace after use. Cartridges only need changing every 12 months or so, depending on use, so can be factored into annual servicing.

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An easy-to-fit in-line filter that can be changed with your annual service.

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BRIG EAGLE 6.7

Quick, responsive and versatile, the latest Eagle from BRIG is a stylish boat with a keen price tag, as Greg Copp reports ...

SUZUKI
BRIG
EAGLE 6.7

Entering the most popular sector of the rigid inflatable market, BRIG's newly launched Eagle 6.7 makes good sense. Replacing their highly successful Eagle 6.5, this new boat is more than just a 20cm hull extension. It has a newly designed deep-vee hull, I am reliably informed, and of course a contemporary retake on style. However, it is still that practical BRIG of old, which is not too surprising, as being one of the biggest RIB manufacturers in the world, reinventing themselves is hardly needed.

Where this boat predominantly differs visually from the Eagle 6.5 is having an antenna mast instead or a radar arch. This is becoming more popular with this size of craft and it makes good sense. The arch is only ever used for mounting GPS and VHF antennas along with navigation lights, and in doing so it gets in the way of people clambering aft to the bathing platforms, and the port quarter ladder. The 6.7 virtually beckons you over the stern quarters, while offering you a stylish box section stainless ski pole built onto the back of the antenna mast as a secure handhold. This pole is high enough for your ski line to run clear over the engine cowling.

The Eagle 6.7 is a boat that comes reasonably specified in standard form, only really needing the F175 engine option to release the boat's full potential.

And the changes do not stop at ditching the arch. Something that makes good sense is the raised aft quarter coamings, which keep the back-seat occupants where you want them, made to feel all the safer by box section handrails to hang onto. Simple things like this make a difference, especially as some family members often find RIBs too hard-core. In keeping with this touch of civilisation is the fold-out table mounted on the back of the helm seats. It can be flipped up in an instant and has three inset cup holders.

The helm is very much like its

Fabric impression Orca Hypalon is used for the sponsons.

Masses of storage under the aft seat.

It is great to drive, is well thought out and no doubt will be just as popular as its predecessor.

6.5m predecessor and, from what I can ascertain, uses the same two-piece construction. This means that the first 18in of the console is part of the deck moulding, with the main top component bolting onto it. This allows for a stronger construction than 'deck bolting' while preventing any long-term water ingress into the console cavity. The design is asymmetrical, enabling easy port side deck access while still providing weather protection for your navigator. This enables the console width to be maximised, allowing for a wide dash that more than accommodates the 9in Garmin MFD. On a related note, what I did not like was the fact that this dash area was not used to facilitate the Suzuki engine display. Instead it was put below the Garmin where the wheel blocks your view of it. You need to be able to easily see this all the time, not just to monitor engine speed, but to keep

FUEL FIGURES (SUZUKI FLOW METER)

RPM	Speed (knots)	LPH	Fuel consumption (nmpg)
1500	5.1	4.7	4.9
2000	7.2	7.5	4.4
2500	10.0	11.0	4.1
3000	14.0	16.0	4.0
3500	21.1	20.8	4.6
4000	24.1	22.0	5.0
4500	28.4	29.0	4.5
5000	32.9	41.0	3.6
5500	38.0	53.0	3.3
5850 (WOT)	41.0	55.3	2.3

Range 170 miles with a 20% reserve at 24 knots

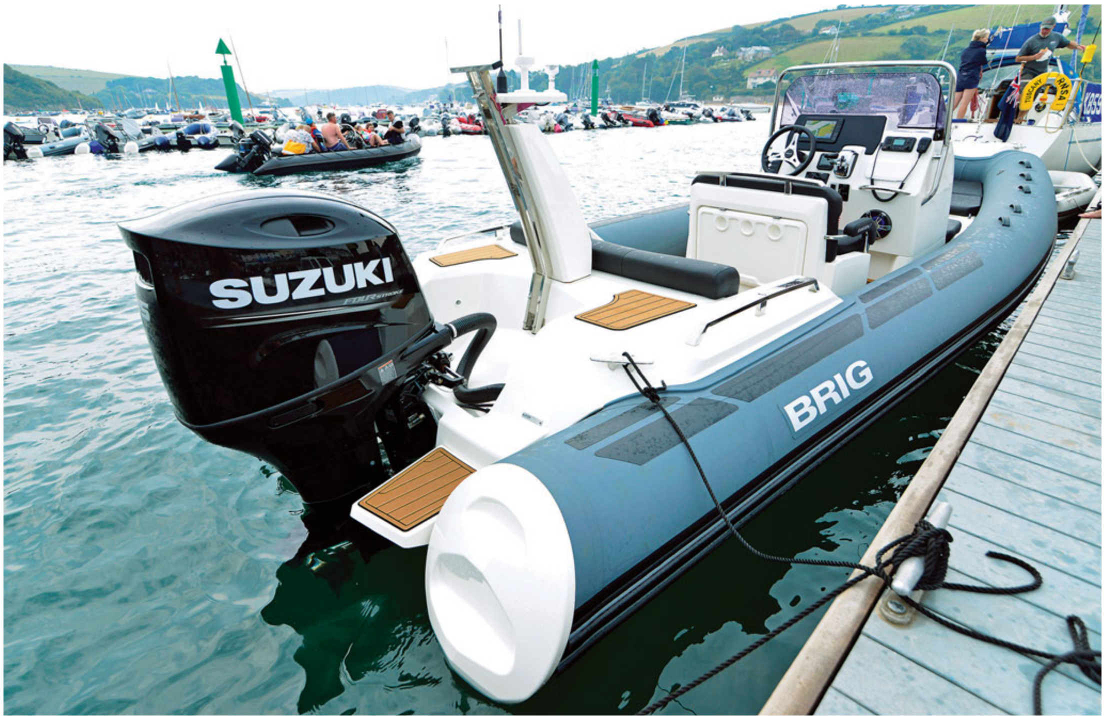
My first impression of this new deep-vee hull, in a word, is 'stability'.

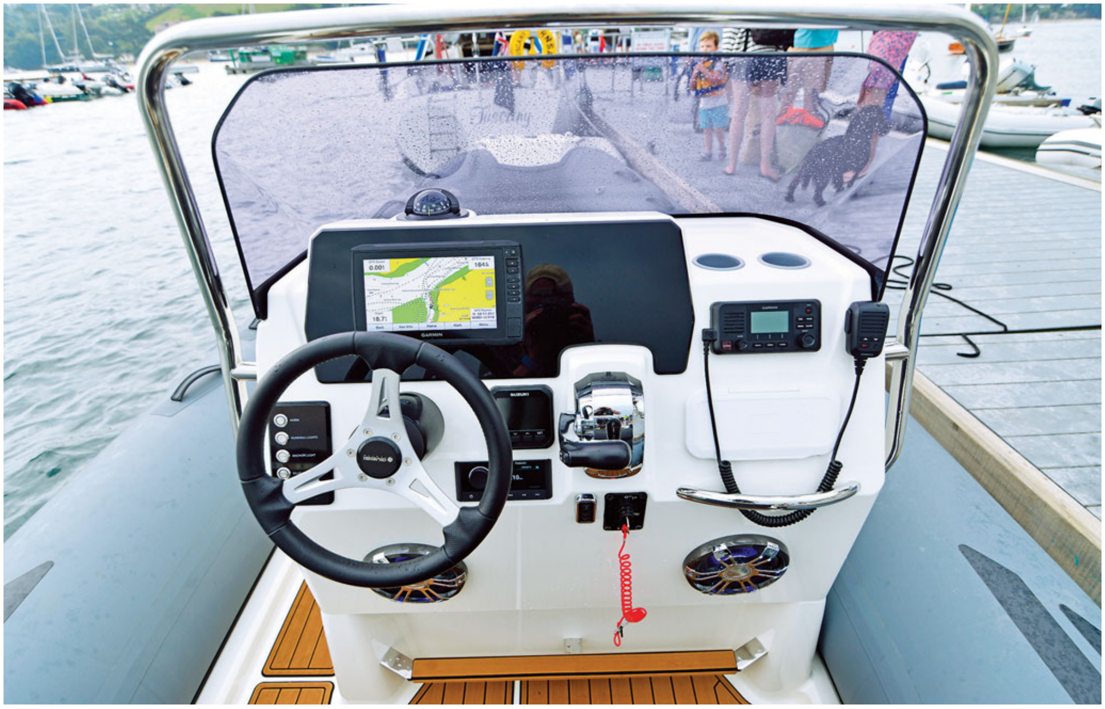
tabs on outboard trim, which, if you drive this boat to its potential, you need to do. I have little doubt that your supplying BRIG dealer can locate this where you want it if required. On the port side of the console, the stainless switches are a neat accessible touch, and the helm is sensibly catered for with two cup holders and a waterproof compartment for things like mobile phones. Luckily the navigator is not forgotten as they get a grab handle.

Seating and helm ergonomics are good. Seat armrests keep you reasonably secured, and a footboard is where you need it if you sit when driving. The wheel and throttles come perfectly to hand and visibility is unhindered over the bow when seated, with the large windscreen keeping all wind out. The seat bases are flip-up bolster types, so you can easily drive standing with your feet against the console if you want. Storage is excellent for a boat this size. The aft bench seat hinges up on two rams to reveal a vast amount of space in the stern area, while also housing the battery cut-off. The double helm seat has plenty of space beneath too, while the seating on the front of the console has a locker underneath, and in the forepeak sit two deep storage compartments – one being the anchor locker.

Driving the Eagle 6.7

My first impression of this new deep-vee hull, in a word, is 'stability'. At wide open throttle at just over 40 knots, this boat sits pretty firmly on the water. It would be fair to say that some of this is down to the fact that the tubes are not mounted too high, but they do not run on the water either. It does not porpoise at all, which is certainly reassuring considering you need to trim the engine out 75% to get the Eagle to pick up fully over 35 knots, when you get an impressive rooster tail for an outboard boat. One thing that was evident - and this is down to this





__1.__ The ski pole is built onto the back of the antenna mast. __2.__ The aft seat is enclosed to offer a degree of security. __3.__ The seat set-up works well either sitting or standing. __4.__The asymmetrical design enables a relatively large console.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 6.7m
Beam: 2.55m
Draught: 0.50m
Displacement: 1.2 tonnes (with engine and 100% fuel)
Power options: 150hp Suzuki F150, 175hp Suzuki F175, 200hp Suzuki F200
Fuel capacity: 191L (42 imp. gal)
RCD category: B for 11
Test engine: Suzuki F175

PRICE

From: £47,595 (inc. VAT) with Suzuki F150
As tested: £54,855 (inc. VAT)

PERFORMANCE

41 knots, sea conditions F2, with 70% fuel and 2 crew

CONTACT

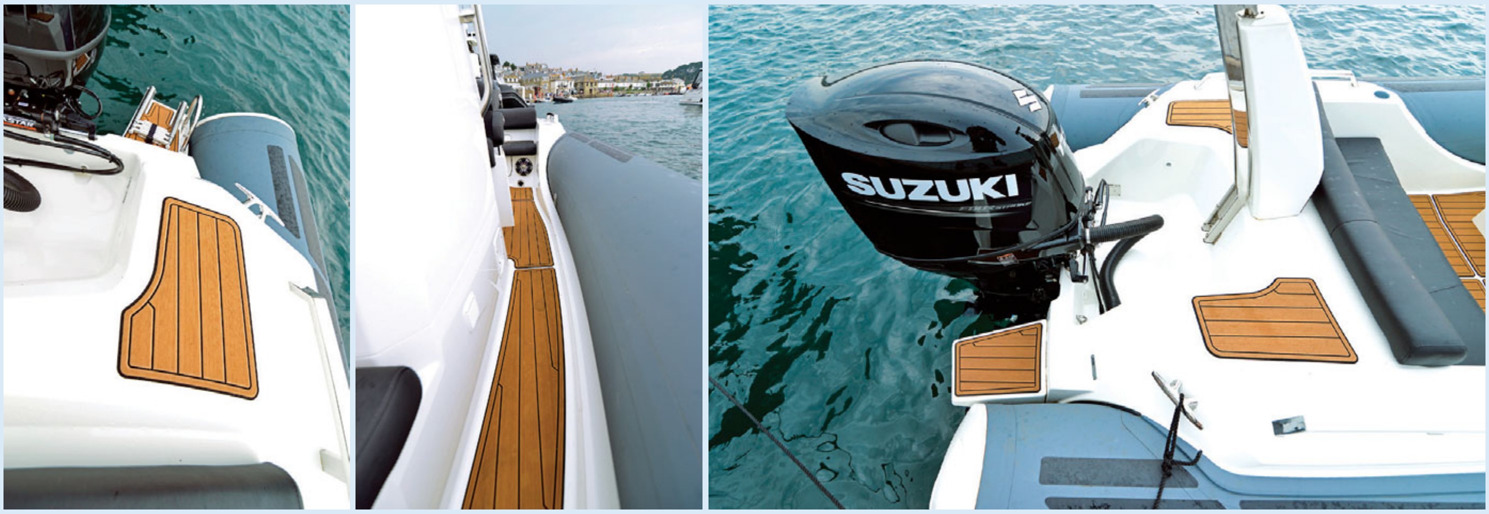
BRIG UK / The Wolf Rock Boat Co, Unit 1G
The South Hams Business Park
Churchstow TQ7 3QH
Tel.: 01548 855751
www.brig.co.uk
www.thewolfrock.co.uk

> **The ride is smooth, though I must say the hardest sea we could find was the wake from the odd big boat running out of Salcombe.**

specific boat - was a degree of cavitation when picking up from below 10 knots. The impression I got was that this was down to needing a prop change, something not unknown for test boats on the day.

The ride is smooth, though I must say the hardest sea we could find was the wake from the odd big boat running out of Salcombe. However, hitting sharp wake at 40 knots does give you a feel for robustness, composure and hull entry, and the boat scores well on all accounts. It turns exceedingly quickly, helped by a deep-vee hull with a good degree of heel, lowish tubes that prevent you from enjoying that heel too much and a powerful steering system. She is great to drive hard in the

These fender rails also make great grab handles.



1. Aft quarter steps provide easy access to the bathing platforms. 2. The side deck is wide and deep enough to provide safe on-deck movement. 3. The raised aft coamings enable the cleat to sit above the tubes – reducing warp rubbing.

turns – perfect for wakeboarding, but you do need to get a feel for her super-responsive drive before you start going into overdrive. I would not say that this boat could lose the stern if you overcooked it, as this did not happen to me, and she does hold a firm line, but your passengers are likely to be making good use of those stern quarter grab handles.

The Eagle 6.7 has three engine options. The smallest is a Suzuki F150, which few choose. The most popular, as tested, is the Suzuki F175, which matches the hull well. About 80% of the Eagle 6.7s are ordered with this engine as it offers good power to weight and is well priced. The next one up is the Suzuki F200, which, based on the same 236kg 2.9L 4-cylinder block as the F175, weighs the same - it just has the advantage of variable valve timing. Arguably this could be a good choice if you intend to load the boat, as the extra spread of torque will certainly be a benefit, and the extra cost is around £1,800.

Verdict

The Eagle 6.7 is a boat that comes reasonably specified in standard form, only really needing the F175 engine option to release the boat's full potential. However, for the lux pack, which includes the DF175, SeaDek decking, electronics, Fusion stereo, covers, bimini and transom shower, you pay an extra 7K, which is worth it, as few credible well-kitted-out 6.7m RIBs come in at this price. It is great to drive, is well thought out and no doubt will be just as popular as its predecessor. ■

She is great to drive hard in the turns – perfect for wakeboarding ...

WHAT WE THOUGHT

FOR

- ▲ Good performance
- ▲ Price
- ▲ Solid construction
- ▲ Practicality
- ▲ Good finish
- ▲ Responsive steering
- ▲ Lots of storage

AGAINST

- ▼ Engine tone above 5000rpm is quite noticeable
- ▼ Engine display needs to be repositioned

Garmin
Quatix 6X Solar

As hard as nails, this all-singing all-dancing solar-assisted watch can literally run your life for you.

Contact: www.garmin.com

4.9
9.8
9.8
4.9
4.9
1.2mi
GARMIN
MOB
BACK LAP

It has basic charts and maps preloaded.

MOB
N 38°51.3330'
W 094°47.9410'
DIST REM
12.4
LIGHT
UP-MENU
DOWN
MOB
GARMIN

The MOB feature is instantly accessible.

Though this watch comes in a high-quality 'Gucci' box, I will not allude to the 'excitement' of unboxing it. Instead I will cut straight to the chase and explain why this £1,000 watch is worth buying. Aside from its bullet- and waterproof construction, it packs an endless list of features that I can just about touch on. Before you start thinking, 'well, that's all well and good, but I will never have the patience, time, need or "tech savviness" to get my head round it', I did, and I do not have the patience of a saint, nor did I consult the online manual.

I will confess to having extensively used its predecessor, the quatix 5, with which it shares many similarities. However, the various menus are easy to navigate regardless of prior knowledge, and given that the 6 Solar has a bigger 1.4in sunlight-readable display, it is easier to read and use on the hoof. It also shows temperature, barometric pressure (increasing or decreasing) and last light. One click on the bottom left button enables you to scroll through some crucial features, notably how the weather is shaping up, heart rate and an accurate compass, among other things. Like many smart devices, it has a wrist heart rate monitor. However, like all wrist monitors, it is only accurate for resting or moderate heart rates; once you exercise, it can't keep an accurate count. For keeping tabs when running, I use one of Garmin's wireless heart rate chest straps - they are spot on.

Many of these features can be found with a cheaper watch, but the Solar 6 has many other tricks up its sleeve. The most impressive is its navigational tool, either on dry land or afloat. It has a base map embedded as well as basic charts, which can be further expanded on with Garmin's BlueChart g3 charts. Stepping outside my house, it picked up a GPS signal in an instant. I then scrolled through to the navigation menu and selected 'Around Me', whereupon it loaded up a map for the area. Then, by pressing the button that scrolls through the options, I was able to rotate a 45-degree segment around the map of my immediate area. If you select one of these segments you have a list of locations to choose from - shops and parking, for example. I chose the local pub. It then gave me the distance and I selected it. From this point you get an arrow giving you direction, with a distance for each leg – just like a car satnav. For the return journey you can select 'Back to Start'.

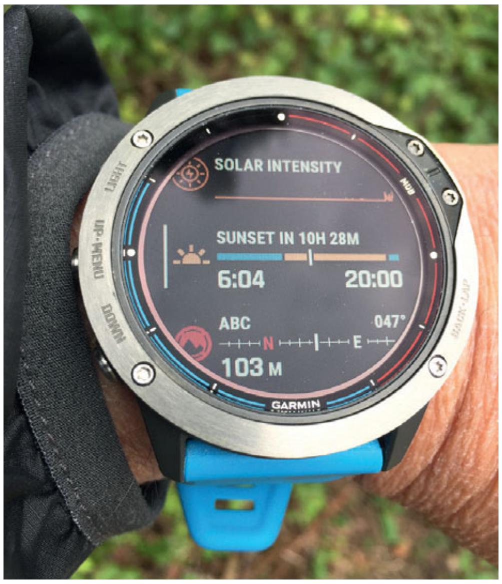
I then tried the quatix in my local forest. The cartography has all of the tracks and streams running through this area, but no contour lines. This time I used the 'Track Me' facility and set off along the deer paths, which are unmarked on any map. It never lost the GPS signal in heavy woodland, constantly showing my location on the map, and when I wanted to return on the same tenuous route, I used 'Track Back' and it did exactly that with total precision.

Naturally, the same navigational features apply when used at sea. You can easily select navigational marks and then navigate toward them. With 'Track Me' you can navigate a pilotage, for example, where charts do not accurately reflect shifting sands, and then for your return course select 'Track Back'. It goes without saying that on a boat with the latest generation of fixed GPS navigation you will be unlikely to use a watch to navigate, but for small craft the Solar 6 will prove very handy. Like all quatix watches it acts as a wearable instrument, which, when paired with Garmin electronics, can stream NMEA 2000 data. This gives access to information like speed and depth anywhere on board. When paired with an autopilot, it can be used to engage it to change heading as well as preset routes.

Paired by Bluetooth to your phone, you can receive alerts for calls, texts, emails, etc., and its Bluetooth range exceeds that of the quatix 5. It also boasts Garmin Pay contactless payment for those smaller purchases, for which you need the Garmin Connect app – which is also crucial for many other features. It has on-device music storage of up to 2,000 songs, enabling phone-free listening.

To conclude, it is fair to say that to cover this watch fully, in particular its marine capabilities, would require a good four pages, so I will report back at a later date on how it fared at sea.

38h
Standinghall Lane
85m
LIGHT
UP-MENU
DOWN
GARMIN



1: Maps and navigation are easy to get to grips with. 2: Just some of the information quickly available.

XTREME
PERFORMANCE
5 OUTBOARD YEARS warranty
FOR LEISURE USE ONLY
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SELVA S.p.A.
Head office and main factory:
Viale dell'Industria, 13
23037 Tirano (So) - Italy

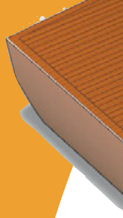
ARKSEN 60

Built for the ultimate long-range adventure, this is a passage maker like no other.

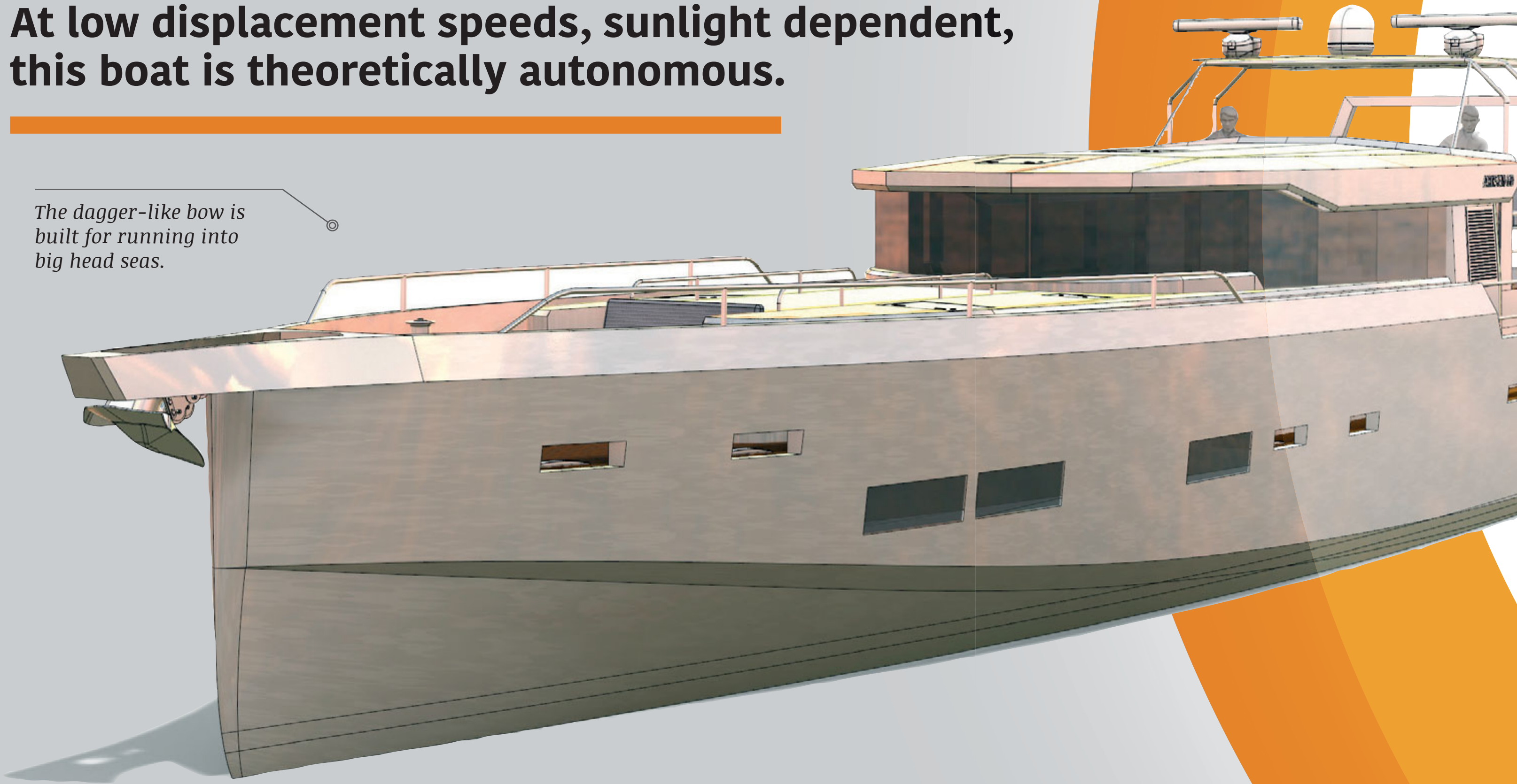
The Arksen 60 is a boat, barring its own brand, that has few contemporaries. The best boats are always built without compromise, but Arksen take this concept to another level. Like many tough all-weather craft, it can be coded and is constructed to Lloyd's standards. It is built from 'low-carbon aluminium', 70% of which has been recycled. Strength, speed of construction, lower displacement and the fact that 100% can be recycled at the end of the boat's life are the advantages of building from this material, which for a company heavily focused on the environment are crucial qualities.

It has a staggering range of over 3500nm. This is not just because it displaces just 31 tonnes, but because it has a low displacement-length hull, driven by either pure electrical propulsion, diesel engines or hybrid drives. It also has a huge expanse of solar panels sitting on every square inch of coachroof – capable of returning an estimated 6kW in good sunlight. At low displacement speeds, sunlight dependent, this boat is theoretically autonomous. The Arksen's quoted range of 3500nm will be at displacement cruising speed running on diesel, though the engines to be fitted are yet to be confirmed. How far this can be extended with hybrid power has not been stated, but it will be considerable, so crossing the Atlantic will be easily achievable.

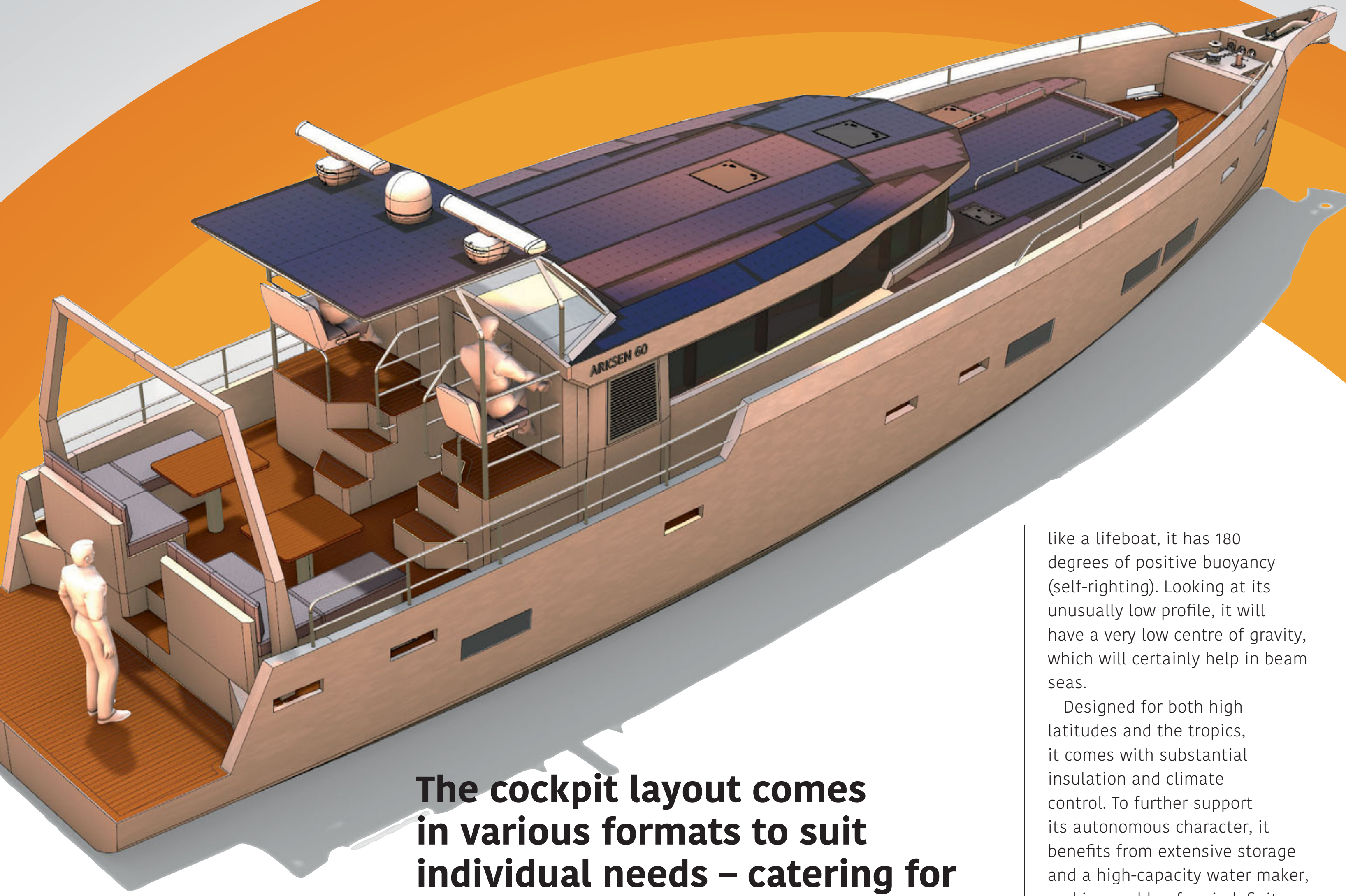
All of this is made possible by its highly efficient low displacement-length hull, or LDL for short. In very simple terms, this means a low displacement in relation to hull waterline length, which inevitably means a narrow beam and little surplus fat - hardly a popular concept with the general design trend these days, which often focuses on creating the maximum accommodation for any given hull length. LDL hulls naturally benefit from minimal beam, as it reduces drag. Based on the basic hull speed formula for calculating maximum displacement speed for a boat with a length-to-beam ratio of 3 to 1, the Arksen 60 should reach 10 knots displacing. However, having a hull waterline length-to-beam ratio nearer 4 to 1, we can realistically suppose its displacement speed will slightly exceed this, enabling it to cover considerable distances at little power.

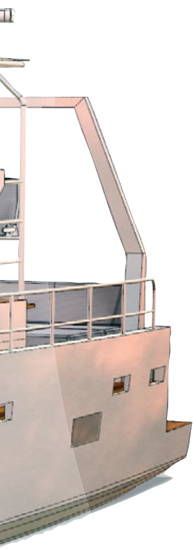


At low displacement speeds, sunlight dependent, this boat is theoretically autonomous.



The dagger-like bow is built for running into big head seas.





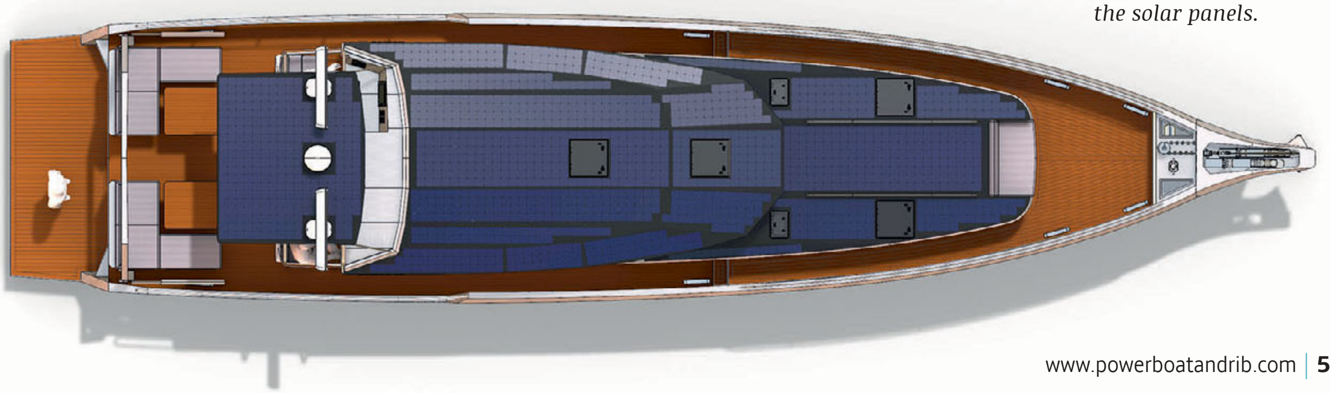
The cockpit layout comes in various formats to suit individual needs – catering for up to 10 guests if need be, or it can be completely open.

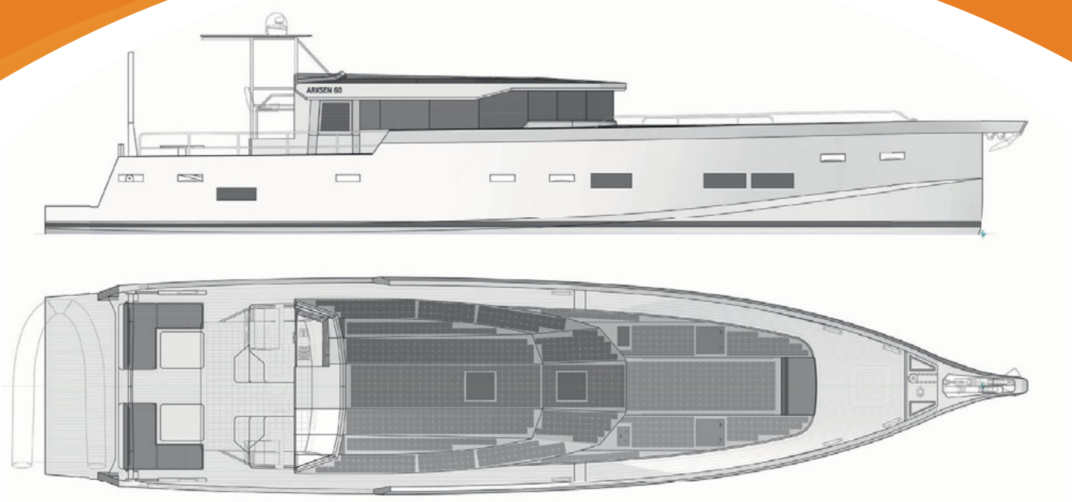
The rakish appearance of the Arksen 60 belies its practical purpose, as does its minimalistic appearance. However, it is built for comfort in tough conditions, which its hull design facilitates, especially in conjunction with the optional active stabilisers – which presumably comprise a fin stabiliser system, though it's large engine bay could accommodate a gyroscopic stabiliser. Impressively, like a lifeboat, it has 180 degrees of positive buoyancy (self-righting). Looking at its unusually low profile, it will have a very low centre of gravity, which will certainly help in beam seas.

Designed for both high latitudes and the tropics, it comes with substantial insulation and climate control. To further support its autonomous character, it benefits from extensive storage and a high-capacity water maker, and is capable of an indefinite zero-carbon footprint at anchor. As Arksen are heavily committed to the concept of ocean conservation, the latest waste management system hardware is employed to achieve 'zero discharge'.

A low air draught and a folding mast are used to enable this boat to navigate the waterways of Europe. The aft A-frame sitting

Not an inch of roof space is wasted for the solar panels.



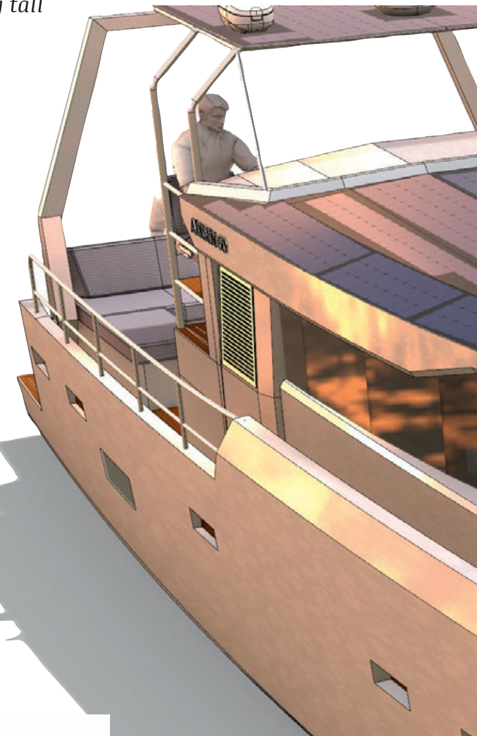


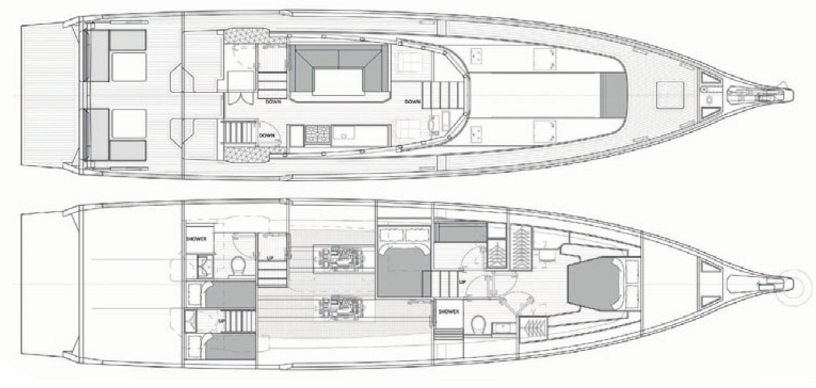
Owning an Arksen comes with many other benefits: 'Arksen Crew Services' provides a recruitment service as and when you need anyone, from a chef to a pilot

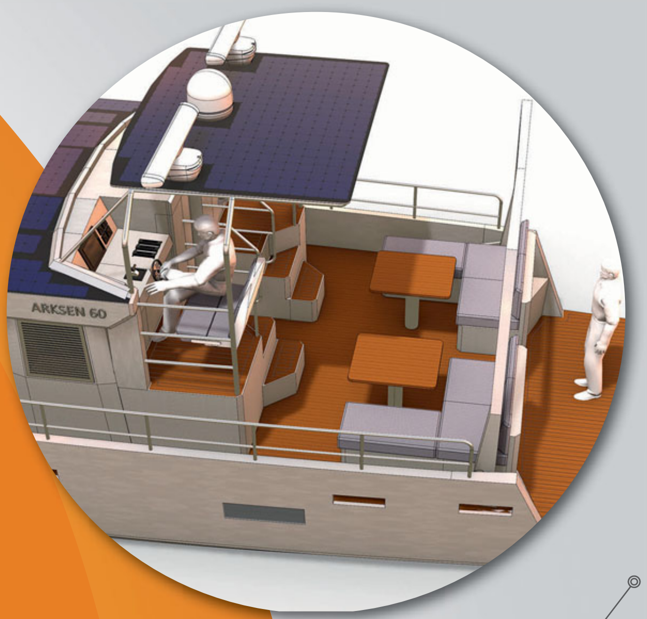
over the cockpit doubles as a crane to lift tenders onto the bathing platform. For longer-term storing of the tender, there is a huge storage area beneath the cockpit, which presumably is accessed through the aft deck hinging open.

The cockpit layout comes in various formats to suit individual needs – catering for up to 10 guests if need be, or it can be completely open. Likewise, the foredeck design can facilitate a variety of social set-ups. Movement on deck could not be much safer thanks to chest-high bulwarks and guard rails.

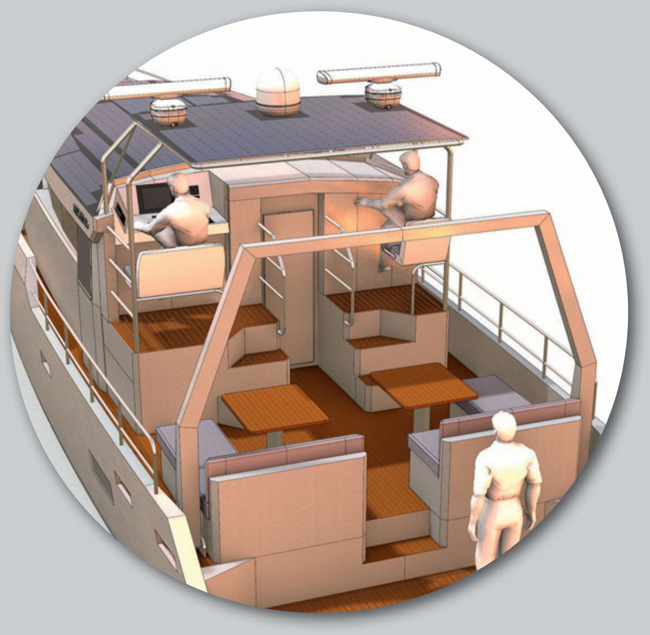
Internally and below decks, the design, not surprisingly, is influenced by the narrow beam and long-range design. This puts the engines and large fuel tanks amidships, which is no bad thing. However, what it means is that the aft double guest cabin is accessed via a separate staircase on the starboard side of the wheelhouse. Opposite, on the port quarter, sits a substantial bathroom also accessed via a separate staircase. Forward of both these cabins, the engine compartment occupies around 25% of the hull length, while the huge storage compartment behind the aft accommodation takes up 20% of the boat's overall length. The forward accommodation comprises two large double cabins, with the forepeak master cabin having en suite access to the forward day head and enjoying extensive storage and hanging lockers. On the port side sits the large double guest cabin, complete with settee and hanging locker. On the main deck, the wheelhouse has a dinette to port and a long galley to starboard, forward of which is located the double helm, with a double navigator's seat opposite. This layout is the standard set-up, but the bespoke nature of this boat means that there are numerous other options for configuring the internal design.


The side decks are enclosed by tall bulkheads.

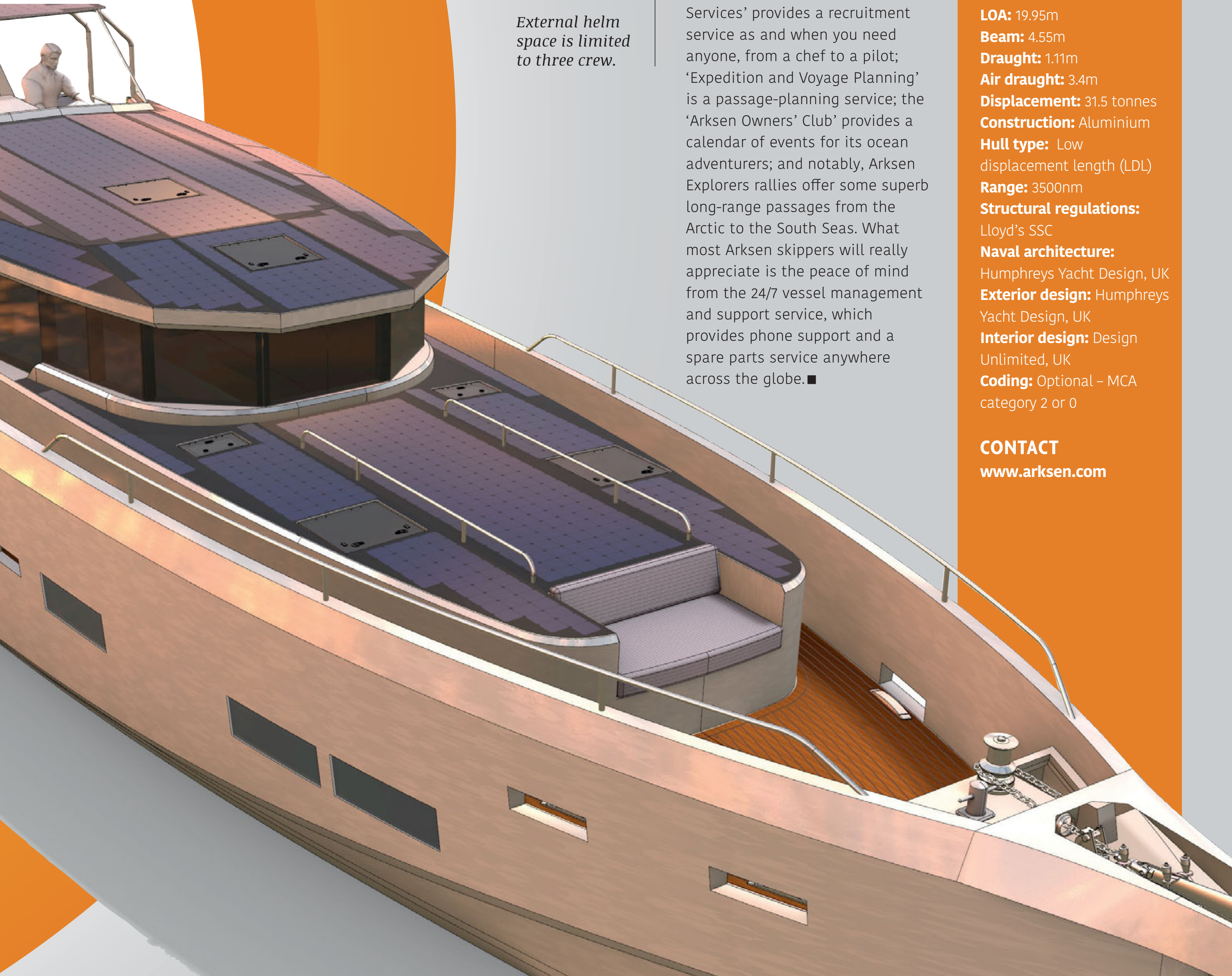




The cockpit can come in different configurations.



External helm space is limited to three crew.



Owning an Arksen comes with many other benefits: 'Arksen Crew Services' provides a recruitment service as and when you need anyone, from a chef to a pilot; 'Expedition and Voyage Planning' is a passage-planning service; the 'Arksen Owners' Club' provides a calendar of events for its ocean adventurers; and notably, Arksen Explorers rallies offer some superb long-range passages from the Arctic to the South Seas. What most Arksen skippers will really appreciate is the peace of mind from the 24/7 vessel management and support service, which provides phone support and a spare parts service anywhere across the globe.■

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 19.95m
Beam: 4.55m
Draught: 1.11m
Air draught: 3.4m
Displacement: 31.5 tonnes
Construction: Aluminium
Hull type: Low displacement length (LDL)
Range: 3500nm
Structural regulations: Lloyd's SSC
Naval architecture: Humphreys Yacht Design, UK
Exterior design: Humphreys Yacht Design, UK
Interior design: Design Unlimited, UK
Coding: Optional – MCA category 2 or 0

CONTACT

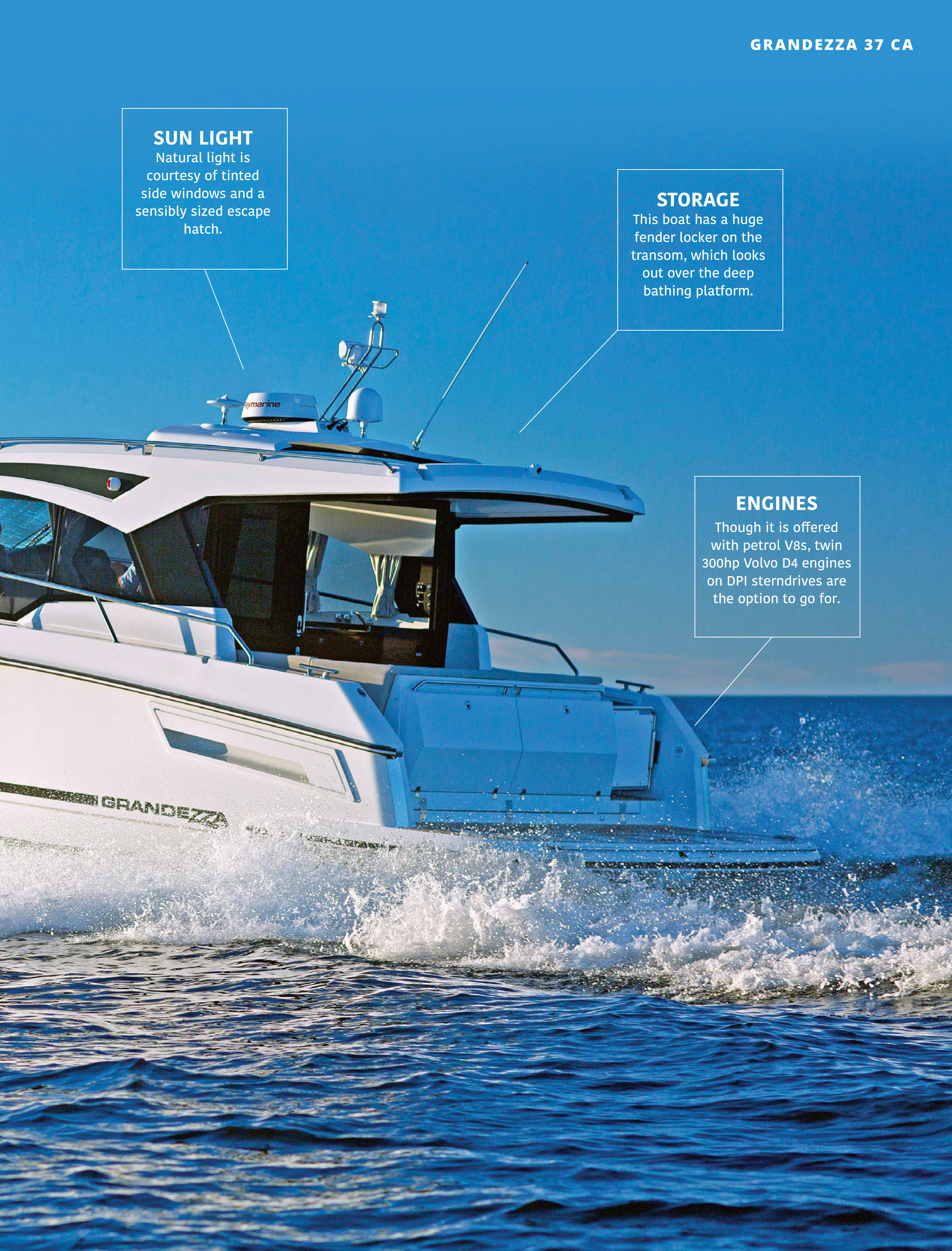
www.arksen.com

GRANDEZZA 37CA

A true driver's boat whose attention to detail is only matched by its superb fit and finish.

One thing that always strikes me about boating is the seemingly never-ending range of hidden gems emerging into the limelight. The Grandezza 37 CA is exactly this, and the yard from which it hails is one of the best-kept secrets in boating. Though its name implies Mediterranean roots, this boat is designed and built in Finland. An offshoot of Finnmaster boats, this company has been building practical and stylish sports cruisers since 2005, with craft ranging currently from 25 to 40 ft.

Finns build great boats and the 37 CA is a classic example of this. Though it is offered with petrol V8s, twin 300hp Volvo D4 engines on DPI sterndrives are the option to go for. This gives this boat a lively performance, picking up onto the plane swiftly and with a top speed of around 36 knots. You could opt for 300hp V8 petrols, but to make good use of its responsive and sure-footed hull you would need a bigger portion



SUN LIGHT
Natural light is courtesy of tinted side windows and a sensibly sized escape hatch.

STORAGE
This boat has a huge fender locker on the transom, which looks out over the deep bathing platform.

ENGINES
Though it is offered with petrol V8s, twin 300hp Volvo D4 engines on DPI sterndrives are the option to go for.

of petrol power, and 600hp in diesel terms is plenty. This boat steers very quickly, which will likely have you enjoying every moment of the tight turns it is easily capable of. Its Scandinavian DNA is obvious in the driving experience, and though it may not quite be a Botnia Targa or a Windy, you would have to be pretty ruthless to take this boat beyond its limits.

In terms of economy, you could expect around 1.5nmpg at its lower cruising speed of 23 knots, dropping to some 1.3nmpg at around 28 knots, so you could expect to cover about 170 miles with a 20% reserve. You are offered Volvo's sterndrive joystick system, which may work well with their latest superquick DPI sterndrive gearboxes, but with a Sleipner bow thruster this boat does not need it.

There are some other tricks on offer to make the Grandezza a hassle-free point-and-shoot boat. Volvo Interceptors are something on the extras list you do not want to ignore. Fast-acting, these will automatically get you up on the plane in a shake, and then set themselves to provide perfect trim in accordance with speed and heel. On top of this, there is also automatic sterndrive leg trim, so you really can settle back and focus on driving this boat in the manner for which it was designed.

The contemporary interior is superbly finished.

Helm ergonomics not surprisingly are good. All-round visibility is unimpaired with no blind spots, and full-height windows let in volumes of natural light.

Helm ergonomics not surprisingly are good. All-round visibility is unimpaired with no blind spots, and full-height windows let in volumes of natural light. Something that not many sports cruisers have is a side door, which, opening onto the wide starboard side deck, makes going single-crewed a realistic proposition. The 37 CA has an asymmetrical wheelhouse/deck design, so the starboard side deck is a realistic full width, and, deep-set all the way to the side door, it is secured by a tall bulwark topped with a high guard rail. Surprisingly, it does lack a side gate by the helm, which would really finish this deck design to perfection. The port side deck is, of course, narrower and not deck height, but with tall guard rails it is still effective.

Moving aft, this boat is embellished with a huge fender locker on the transom, which looks out over the deep bathing platform.

Going forward onto the bow you have the usual sun pad arrangement complete with a fold-up backrest to create, in effect, a bow seat. The anchor locker is suitably cavernous and

The roof overhang with second sunroof provides the best of both worlds.

Side deck security is very good.

accommodates the windlass feeding out through the hull stem. This creates that neat enclosed bow look, while removing a pulpit trip hazard. The cleats are suitably hard-core.

Moving aft, this boat is embellished with a huge fender locker on the transom, which looks out over the deep bathing platform. Engine access is via a ram-powered hatch in the cockpit, and on top of this there is a large storage compartment under the saloon floor opposite the galley. This will accommodate a mountain of cruising kit and provisions.

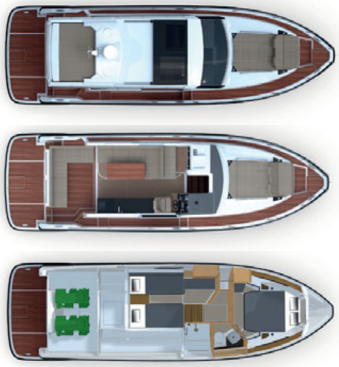
The galley is generous, all things considered, and so as not to create any blind spots all storage is beneath the countertop. This works very well as the galley runs pretty much down the entire starboard side of the wheelhouse, with plenty of storage. On top of a fridge there is an extra drawer cool box, cooking is via a ceramic hob and microwave, and there is even a built-in extractor fan. The fit, finish and attention to detail behind the scenes are impressive. Both tables - saloon and cockpit - can be electrically adjusted for height, and hydraulic rams seem to endorse every locker and seat base.

The master cabin bed is well elevated.

This under-sole mid cabin has a bed that converts to two singles.

Going below, this level of detailing and build quality is maintained, and the superb hardwood joinery becomes even more apparent. At the bottom of the companionway steps you have a large full-height storage locker on the port side, which would likely provide extra space for your guests to stash their belongings. Opposite is the shared head compartment, superbly finished internally with a full-height separate shower cubicle of generous proportions. The master cabin in the forepeak is what you would expect of a 37ft sports cruiser. A tall island double bed is accessible from both sides and a hanging locker sits to port. Natural light is courtesy of tinted side windows and a sensibly sized escape hatch. The under-sole cross-beam guest cabin offers either two single beds or, with an infill, a very large double. Standing headroom is in the doorway only, and, not that surprisingly, storage is limited.

The 37 CA is a superbly finished boat with typically Scandinavian attention to detail. You get the impression that when its designers had finished, they went back for a second take, just in case they had left some inch of space unused or some stone unturned. There is, of course, a price to pay for this meticulous approach, in this case between £430,000 and £450,000, depending on the spec. Regardless, I don't think there will be a shortage of buyers. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 11.55m (37ft 11in)
Beam: 3.50m (11ft 7in)
Draught: 1.2m (3ft 11in)
Displacement: 7500kg (dry)
Fuel capacity: 650L (143 gal)
Water capacity: 260L (57 gal)
Engine options: Twin diesel Volvo 260hp/300hp D4s on DPI sterndrives or twin petrol 300hp 6.2L MerCruisers on Bravo 3 sterndrives

CONTACT

www.gibbsboatsales.co.uk

THE GENERATION GAME

Based on the banks of the Middle Thames, the family firm **Peter Freebody & Co.** has, from generation to generation, been devoted to the business of boatbuilding and maritime craftsmanship. Today, the yard continues in the fine traditions of the past, but outward appearances can be deceiving.

As **Simon Everett** was to discover, here at Peter Freebody's, tradition really can forge a seamless bond with the contemporary and even embrace the future ...

Riva

As an island nation, criss-crossed by several large arterial waterways, it was inevitable that our maritime traditions would become a powerful force within the annals of our country. The water was, and still is, the lifeblood of Britain, and none more so than the great river that flows from the home counties and on through the capital - that bastion of Britain, the great Father Thames.

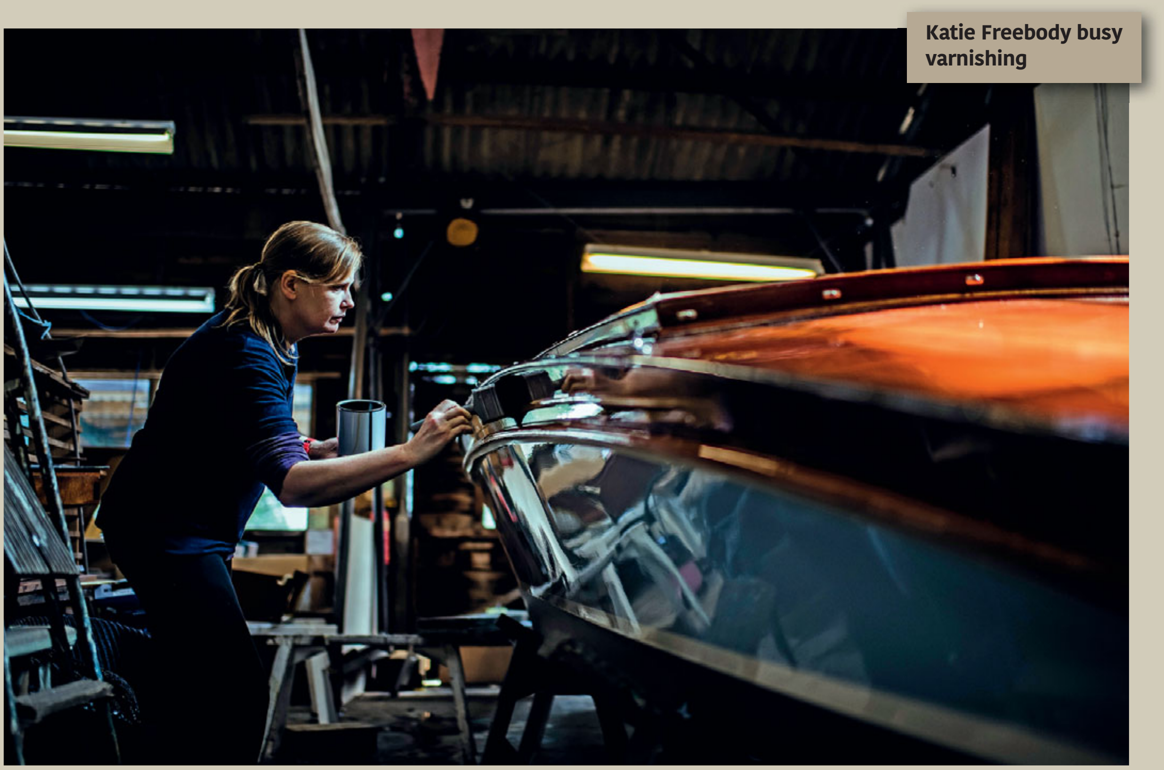
The nation's artery

This mighty river has been an influence on our fortunes throughout history. Ever since Englishmen first built boats, this major river has been a route for trade, for invasion and for leisure purposes over many centuries. Throughout the years, one boatyard has been a constant presence in the middle section of the Thames. Since the 13th century, Peter Freebody & Co. have had ancestors working as boatbuilders and boatmen on the bustling Middle Thames. This boatyard is still within the same family, handed down from father to son, and if we average it as being three generations per century, that equates to a traceable boatbuilding lineage stretching back 24 or 25 generations. In fact, the Freebody yard can legitimately claim to be the oldest boatbuilding yard in Britain still within the same family - unless, of course, you know different.

The modern era of the Freebody boatyard, which gained an immense reputation for the quality of their work, can be attributed to Peter Freebody, father of the current custodians. Peter grew up at the boatyard, which is based at Hurley, where boats were still built by hand, from wood, until such time as he inherited the yard from his parents and just happened to be the incumbent in charge at the time of the great boating boom. Yes, the Victorian era set the foundations for the leisure boating business, but it was the 1950s and 60s, in those post-war years, where people really started to let their hair down again and the modern era of boating on the river took hold - but with a twist. The age of plastic was upon us, and the masses were happy to settle for second best with plywood or glass fibre. But Peter wasn't. His heart was in proper wooden boatbuilding, so he did his apprenticeship at a traditional boatbuilders, Woottens of Cookham, before bringing his newly honed skills back to the family yard at Hurley.

The timing couldn't have been better, coinciding with engine improvements filtering down from the need for both military might and civilian use following the war. The Peter Freebody yard was well placed to serve this growing demand, and improvements were made to expand the capabilities and services on offer. The yard was enhanced, with new, purpose-built buildings being erected and a slipway installed, and the business grew rapidly as word spread of the high-quality craftsmanship available. This in turn gave people a renewed confidence in wood as a boatbuilding material. The aesthetics, the suitability and the longevity cannot be beaten.

Sad to say, Peter went the way of all life in 2010, but he has left a lasting legacy, and now his son, Richard, and three daughters, Mel, Kate and Helen, are continuing


Katie Freebody busy varnishing

THEY WILL CONTINUE TO WORK IN WOOD AS IT IS THE MOST NATURAL AND ECOLOGICAL MATERIAL AVAILABLE, PROVIDED IT IS SOURCED FROM SUSTAINABLE PLANTATIONS.

The Freebody workshop

the family tradition, with Richard's wife Kirsty also getting roped in to help with various events. The yard is as popular as ever, maintaining customers' boats, restoring old finds or cherished inherited ones, and providing boatbuilding skills that are few and far between nowadays.

Rally around

The Thames Traditional Rally, which is held at Henley each summer (although not this one, for obvious reasons), attracts masses of wooden boats from all over the country and even abroad. Over the years, Peter Freebody's have enjoyed much success in the Concours d'Elégance at the 'Trad Rally', as it is affectionately known. Some of the steam launch, slipper launch and electric canoe restorations the yard has undertaken have been simply mind-blowing and wowed both the crowds and the judges.

Every detail is meticulously cared for, right down to the last stitch on the upholstery. Of course, one of the appealing aspects of a beautifully crafted wooden boat is the colour and grain of the timber, brought to life through lovingly applied varnish; none of your polyurethane pretenders either, but pure tung oil varnish - unless, of course, the customer specifically demands different. Propulsion systems are another aspect that has to be taken care of - or at least thought about. From ancient steam engines to vintage combustion engines and electric motors, the Freebody yard can make sure that every facet is taken care of to either bring about a full restoration or simply ensure your pride and joy is maintained to the highest standard.

> EVERY DETAIL IS METICULOUSLY CARED FOR, RIGHT DOWN TO THE LAST STITCH ON THE UPHOLSTERY.

Over the years, several landmark restorations have firmly enshrined the Freebody yard in the boatbuilding hall of fame. In the 1970s, there was a resurgence of interest in classic motorboating and traditional Thames craft in general. The Peter Freebody boatyard was entrusted with the task of completely restoring a 60ft steam launch that had been

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built in 1883 at Bourne End by the Horsham yard, and operated as a party boat and ferry during her working life. Alaska was discovered in 1974 taking the bottom at Medley Boat Station, Oxford; she had been covered over with plywood and filled with concrete to create a solid pontoon. The once magnificent steam launch had suffered total neglect. The Freebody restoration took 18 years and included reuniting her with the original engine; it was so comprehensive that Alaska was awarded 'Best in Show' at the prestigious Thames Traditional Boat Festival of 1987, the year she was relaunched.

Comfortable slippers

Other major restorations have been completed by the time-served craftsmen at the yard - from small, traditional Thames skiffs to major river craft of up to 80ft in length. One notable pair of 1950s J-Class yacht tenders were to be correct in every detail, one of which was Herring Gull, which was fully restored for Peter de Savary to head the flotilla of yacht tenders supporting his America's Cup challenge in 1992. Many slipper launches, both from the famous Andrews builder and others, have been given a new generation or two of life thanks to the skill and determination of the team at Freebody's.

No story about Thames boats would be complete without mention of slipper launches - the iconic, sleek and stylish picnic motorboat that is such a feature of Thames boating. They originated on the Thames and were originally designed by Andrews. They range from 20 to 30 ft, with the longer boats being more popular and therefore more numerous. Many are kept at the Freebody facility and are looked after by their experienced boatbuilders and marine engineers - and enjoy the delicate touch of Katie's hand on the brightwork. The depth of her varnishing finish is now legendary and has given them an edge in the judging stakes.

Another very interesting restoration project that was entrusted to this yard was that of Elfin, a boat built specifically to take an individual engine. The engine was built in 1895, a year before the boat was commissioned by her owner, Sir James Restler, who was the chief engineer for the Thames Water Board. It was he who oversaw the building of the London sewerage and water system. He had the engine built, then commissioned Constables of Hampton to construct the boat out of carvel teak on oak frames. It is interesting to note that the engine was built specifically for the purpose, as the date and name of the yet-to-be-constructed boat were cast into the engine block in readiness. The hull is extremely efficient, being aero fuselage shaped, like a cigar tube, and has extremely light displacement. Consequently, she is an absolute charm to behold as she slips effortlessly through the water making barely any wake.

FOR EVERY TREE FELLED, TWO REPLACEMENTS ARE PLANTED AND NURTURED, MAKING THE ENTIRE CYCLE CARBON-NEUTRAL AND OF BENEFIT FROM AN ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION PERSPECTIVE.

Richard Freebody at work

While these boats are glorious to behold and represent halcyon days of carefree fun, readers of Powerboat & RIB will be more inclined towards seagoing motorboats, and this is where Peter Freebody & Co. can pique more interest. Since the 1980s, the yard has been closely associated with the magnificent Italian, wooden, iconic sports runabouts from the Riva family. It was a chance encounter with an insurance write-off that firmly established the yard as a recognised Riva restorer. The boat in question was a Super Aquarama called BiBi that was at one time owned by Brigette

Freebody boatyard moorings

Elfin with Traditional Boat Festival 2019 trophies.

Bardot, hence her name. The boat suffered a catastrophic fire, and when assessed by the Riva factory she was considered a total loss and beyond economic repair.

Viva Riva!

The remains of BiBi were put up for sale and Peter Freebody bought her from Carlo Riva himself. Peter drove down with a trailer to the Riva facility alongside Lake Iseo and towed her charred shell home. They reasoned that the fire started in the engine bay and was either due to an engine failure, with hot oil getting onto the exhaust, or possibly a fuel system failure. Over the next couple of years, Peter and his team set about restoring BiBi to her former glory. As she neared completion, word arrived that there was a meeting of the Riva Historical Society at the Riva factory on Iseo. They were determined to have her completed in time to take her out for that event. When they arrived with her on the trailer, Carlo Riva couldn't believe the job they had made of her - she was magnificent, possibly better than when she was new. So impressed was Signor Riva that he was perfectly happy to endorse Peter Freebody & Co. as an approved Riva restorer. From that day on, the Thames yard has been the go-to workshop for Riva repairs or restorations.

Over the years, many of these Italian wonders have been through the marine engineering shop for engine rebuilds, the varnish shop for the brightwork to be brought up to scratch and for general maintenance. The true icons of the Riva range are the barrel-backed boats, Tritone, Ariston and Aquarama, whose grace and elegance is a true reflection of la dolce vita. Even as I write, the yard is working on a couple of Rivas - one is a Super Florida and the other is an Olympic.

Electric avenue

With the current emphasis on electric everything, I asked Richard Freebody about this in relation to their situation. Of course, electric boating is nothing new - the late Victorian era saw charging points installed along the Thames at various strategic locations because electric 'jolly boats' were very much in vogue. The motors were supplied with electricity from a bank of glass-housed lead acid accumulators that provided suitable ballast, and when compared to the combustion engines of the day, they were very similar in weight. The virtually silent running, though, provided a very tranquil passage with no smelly, oily mechanics - quite becoming of a gentleman's conveyance for taking the air and a sumptuous, society picnic.

> THE TRUE ICONS OF THE RIVA RANGE ARE THE BARREL-BACKED BOATS, TRITONE, ARISTON AND AQUARAMA, WHOSE GRACE AND ELEGANCE IS A TRUE REFLECTION OF LA DOLCE VITA.

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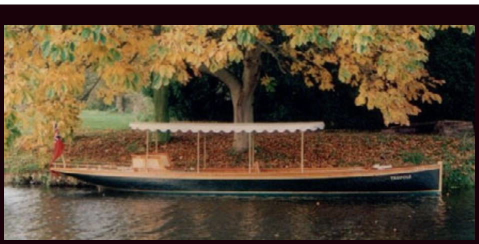
The river is ideal for such boats, and Freebody's are well ahead of the game because of their involvement over the generations with electric boats and boating. They have restored a fair few vintage electric boats. One memorable commission was for Tadpole, a counter-stern, straight-stemmed launch built in 1895. She was in a terrible state and they ended up building a virtually new boat around the original machinery, replacing the glass accumulators with modern lead acid batteries to supply the required 24V.

Electric canoes are another very popular design from the 1890s onward. With their very sleek lines, the high length-to-beam ratio makes them very power-efficient, and the convivial seating arrangement of occupants facing each other provides a unique experience, as they are sat almost on the waterline. Don't be fooled by the term 'canoe', by the way - some of these craft are 30ft long.

Richard confided that they intend to maintain the aesthetics and highly efficient hull shapes from this golden era of boating in the



History in a nutshell

The Freebody family have been living and working on the Middle Thames as boatbuilders, bargemen, fishermen and ferrymen since the 13th century, at Hurley and previously at Caversham, Berkshire. In 1933, Peter Freebody's mother and father took over the site at Hurley from Peter's grandmother, and it was here, a year later, that Peter was born. The boatyard in which Peter grew up was typical of Thames family boatyards of that era. Wooden boats were built - by hand and by line of eye - in ways that had changed little in a thousand years. But in the 1950s, things were changing. People were embracing plywood and plastic, classic launches were falling out of favour and the tradition of wooden boatbuilding on the Thames was in decline. Peter was determined to keep the family craft alive, and after serving an apprenticeship building clinker dinghies downstream at Woottens Cookham yard, he returned to the family boatyard and began to shape it into the business that stands today. New sheds were built, new machinery installed and a slipway dug. Peter and his friends worked hard, building and repairing wooden boats to exceptionally high standards. And the work paid off. The demand for their craftsmanship, and for wooden boats, rose. After 61 years of successfully playing his part in continuing the Freebody family tradition of boatbuilding on the Thames, Peter sadly passed away in December 2010. Today, Peter's son Richard is at the helm, assisted by his sisters Melanie, Katie and Helen and the team at Hurley, and the Freebody tradition continues.

new boats they are building, while also making use of the most up-to-date technology for the propulsion systems. Fixtures and fittings will be of the highest quality and produced to suit the customer. They will continue to work in wood as it is the most natural and ecological material available, provided it is sourced from sustainable plantations. For every tree felled, two replacements are planted and nurtured, making the entire cycle carbon-neutral and of benefit from an environmental and conservation perspective.

> THE RIVER IS IDEAL FOR SUCH BOATS, AND FREEBODY'S ARE WELL AHEAD OF THE GAME BECAUSE OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT OVER THE GENERATIONS WITH ELECTRIC BOATS AND BOATING.

Peter Freebody & Co.

Slipstream and nostalgia

The whole ethos of the yard works around a personal, bespoke service providing handcrafted results, not mass-produced ones. To that end, the Freebody team have drafted a range of slipper launch designs for the modern era. They are authentic in appearance, with the traditional aft sheerline that sets them apart from other craft. Married into these lines are a couple of seating arrangements to choose from called the ‘Slipstream’ series. There is an open version with a short foredeck and additional facilities to the standard arrangement, with U-shaped aft seating, a cocktail cabinet or whatever the customer requires. These boats are propelled by a state-of-the-art electric motor and battery bank from the Mastervolt stable, providing extended range and fast charging.

For something really special, though, there is a ‘Nostalgia’ version planned that has the traditional long foredeck and sports seating in a 2+4 arrangement with stowage within the seat framework. These will have at their heart a 4.2L straight-six Jaguar engine as found in the E-Type, and consequently they will be for the connoisseur who wants something exceptional. As you might expect, these boats will feature the best wood and fittings, with a limited number of builds, and will be something to behold when they are on the water.

The future of Peter Freebody & Co. as a family yard is looking assured. The current generation are not resting on any laurels and have ideas to move forward, and already the next generation - Richard’s children are all showing a keen interest in continuing the tradition, so there is every likelihood of the yard chalking up another century in their long and glittering history. ■

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GRAND GOLDEN LINE 420

EVINRUDE
GRAND

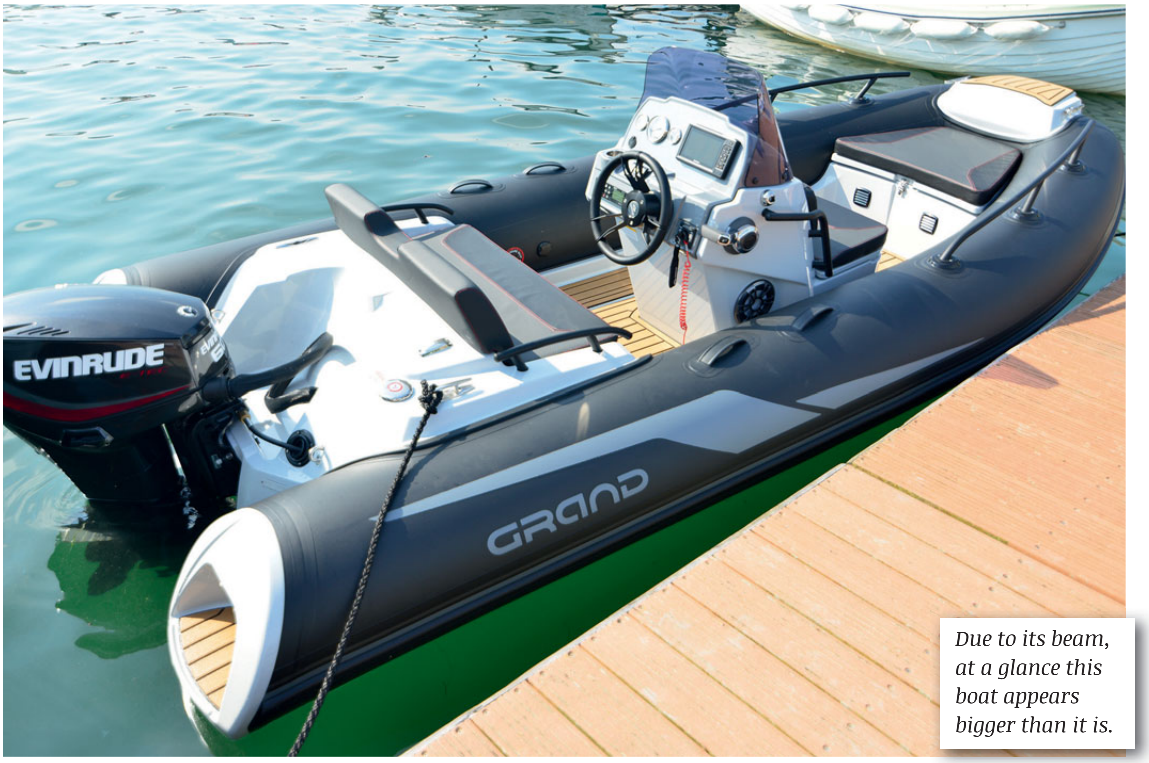
Greg Copp explores a small boat with a big-boat attitude, built for fun and constructed to last.

GRAND

Historically speaking, this Ukrainian boatbuilder is relatively new to the game, but over the last 15 years it has established itself well in the seemingly ever-expanding RIB market. One thing you can be sure of with this brand is that attention to detail is a constant entity across its range. Grand's new Golden Line 420 is an example of this, as a fleeting glance will tell you. Most small RIBs are built to a budget, but the 420 is a small boat with many big-boat standards, such as large cleats mounted on the sides of a bow step capped with synthetic teak.

For those who want a runaround that may spend a good chunk of its life on a mooring buoy while serving as a seagull toilet, this is probably not on your shopping list. The Golden Line 420 is aimed at a broader market, as not only is it a great yacht tender but it is also a credible sports boat in its own right. Most tenders serve the secondary purpose of being a water sports tool, but this pocket rocket has a bit more going for it. Based on a similar design to its bigger sibling the Golden Line 480, it has the same generous 2m beam; however, it uses slightly smaller 48cm-diameter sponsons, so it has nearly identical deck space. The room on deck was what struck me when I first stepped on board, along with the wide bench seat serving the helm. The asymmetrical deck design, which places the console on the starboard side, means you can walk forward without having to cling to the console while shuffling down a 6in strip. In the foredeck area you get the obligatory forward-facing console seat, and facing that a small sun pad, both of which can be connected with an infill to create a sunbed from console to bow. In order to make use of

It is often said that the best fun afloat is messing around in small boats, and the Grand Golden Line 420 proves this.



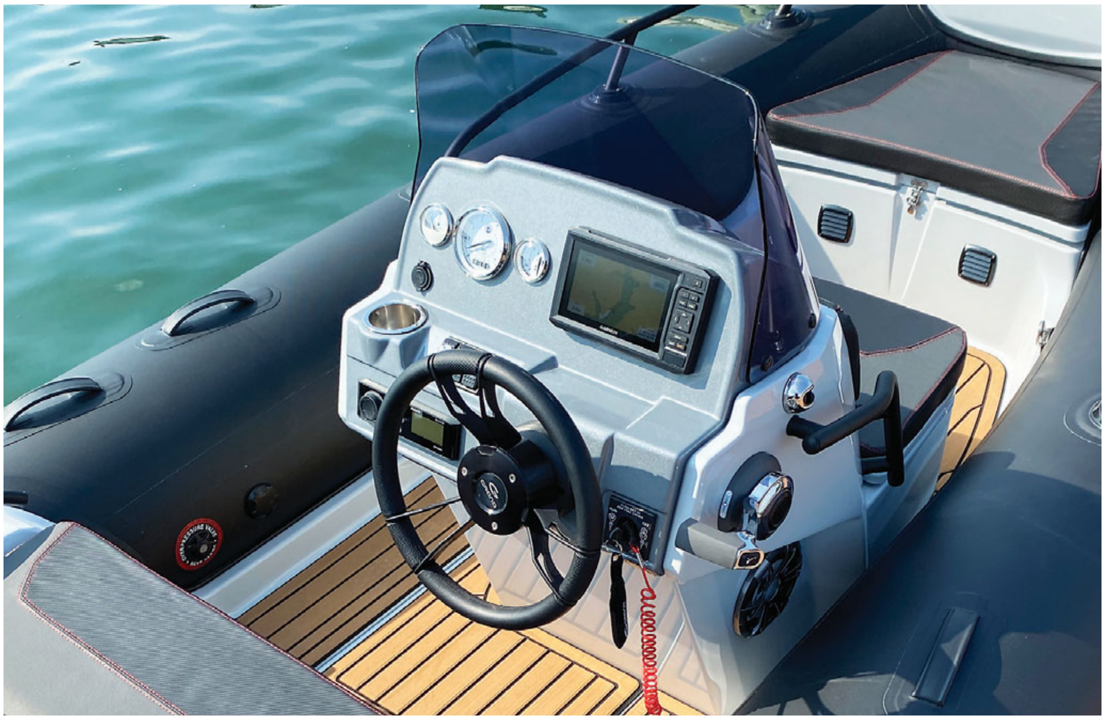
Due to its beam, at a glance this boat appears bigger than it is.

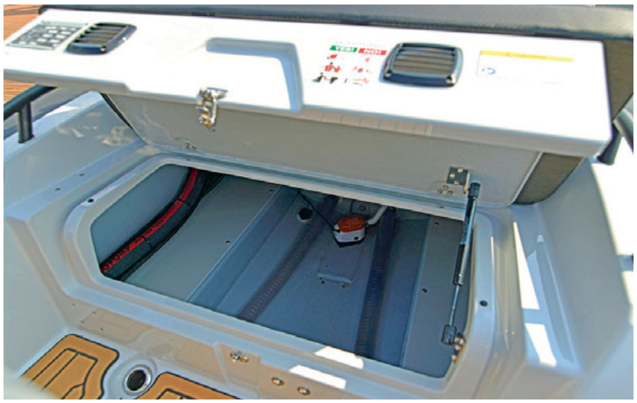
the sun pad as an aft-facing seat, there are powder-coated grab rails mounted on the forward sponsons - crucial if anyone intends to sit in this lively part of the boat at speed. There is also the option of a bimini top.

Though this boat is rated for six, it can take four adults seated fairly comfortably. In reality, apart from when being employed as a bay blaster or a water taxi, this is a two-man boat if used in earnest for any duration. The helm set-up offers a good degree of weather protection, and legroom and ergonomics are pretty good, so two can soak up some sea miles in reasonable weather. There are no less than three storage compartments. In the forepeak there is a large vented anchor locker under the sun pad, with a divider to keep the anchor and chain securely in one place. On the front of the console sits a compartment housing the battery and fuses, which are easily accessed, with a small amount of storage space in front of them. Under the aft helm seat there is a large storage cavity that goes back under the aft coamings and splash well, which gives access to the bilge pump and depth transducer. This makes good use of every square inch of this area. Like the forepeak locker it is vented and has lockable catches, and due to the extra weight of the seat it has a gas strut. You could certainly store quite a few wetsuits and crew savers in here, or alternatively an inflatable toy.

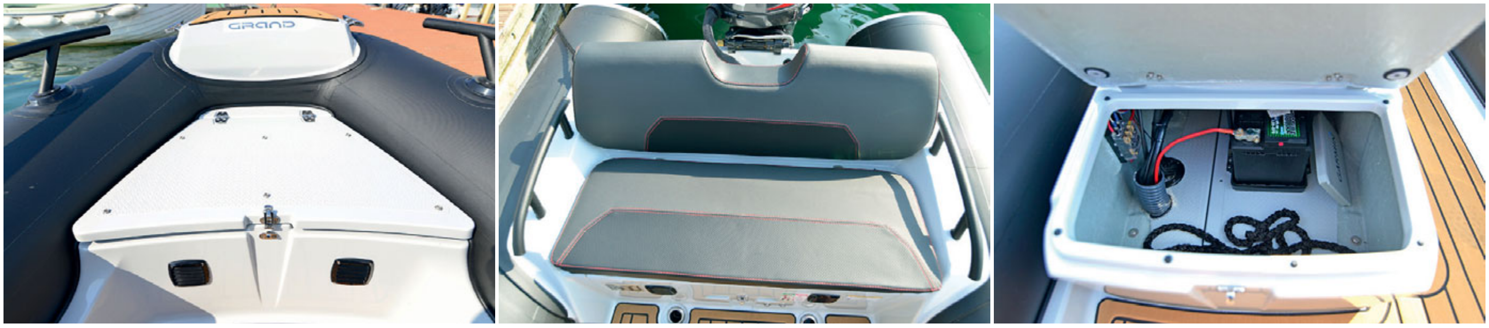
The room on deck was what struck me when I first stepped on board, along with the wide bench seat serving the helm.

The boat comes standard in this country with thick synthetic SeaDek teak. I can attest to its barefoot effectiveness, as its resilience to hot sun was proven on the day. The deck is also self-draining, with two drains running back from the aft seat - unusual in a small boat. Our test boat was fitted with a 55L under-deck fuel tank - technically





1. The console is wide enough for two, without encroaching on forward access. 2. This aft locker under the seat is huge for a 4.2m RIB. 3. Big bow cleats. 4. Deck movement is easy.



1. High-quality GRP finish. 2. Silvertex fabric – durable and waterproof. 3. Easy access to the battery and fuses.

an extra that UK agents Wills Marine fit as part of their UK-spec package. Apart from the extra range of having 11 gallons, this puts this 42kg of fuel, plus the weight of the tank itself, under the console, amidships, along with the weight of the battery mounted above it. This is a good design move and no doubt helped this boat to plane at 12-13 knots. I initially wondered how a boat that will get used for water sports provided a route in and out of the water other than heaving oneself over the tubes. The answer is both discreet and effective. There are two planing tabs on the bottom of the transom acting as mini trim tabs - one on each side. These act as a step enabling you to step up onto the synthetic teak-laid inserts on the end of the sponsons, with handrails either side of the bench seat providing you with the means to pull yourself up. There is also a ski pole fitted as standard, but our test boat did not have one.

Tube rails provide secure handholds for those sitting in the bow.

Driving the 420 Golden Line

Firstly, I am going to talk engines. The test boat had one of the last 60hp 2-stroke E-TECs, which sadly will be no more. Instead this boat will now be offered with F40, F50 or F60 Yamahas, all long-shaft. These are great engines - they just lack that 2-stroke howl and initial low-down pickup that a 2-stroke engine provides. All these 4-stroke Yamahas are based on the same 4-cylinder 996cc engine block, and all weigh very close to the light 114kg E-TEC, so there will be no

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 4.2m
Beam: 2m
Displacement: 255kg (no engine)
Power options: 40–60 hp Yamaha
Fuel capacity: 55L
RCD category: C
Test engine: 60hp Evinrude E-TEC

PERFORMANCE

Speed: 37 knots
Range: 100 miles at 25 knots with 20% reserve

PRICE

As tested: This exact boat with Evinrude 60hp & trailer £24,995 incl. VAT. With Yamaha 60hp & trailer £28,195 incl. VAT.

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Drop-down cleats in the stern quarters – no trip hazards.

It may have been aimed, among other things, at the luxury yacht tender market, but it has the ability to go further.

weight penalty. With the E-TEC this boat hits 37 knots, and with the moderate conditions of the day it was very composed at this speed, no doubt helped by a wide beam and the good weight distribution. The 420 is quick off the mark as you would expect, as it has a healthy power-to-weight ratio. She likes around 50% trim out on the outboard to get the last 4 knots or so, which is to be expected, but she generally rides fairly level. When turning tightly, the low tubes provide plenty of stability, so she will be great for water sports. This boat has a medium-vee hull, which enhances her stability at rest, and her solid construction is reassuringly evident when you start squeezing every last knot from her.

Verdict

It is often said that the best fun afloat is messing around in small boats, and the Grand Golden Line 420 proves this. It may have been aimed, among other things, at the luxury yacht tender market, but it has the ability to go further. You can store it in a garage and launch it with the minimum of tide, and with a range of over 100 miles with a 20% reserve, you can explore unknown and overlooked locations. Naturally the 420 will have a lot of 'new boater appeal', but its fun factor will no doubt create a broad spectrum of interest. At a price of £25,000 as tested, including the under-deck fuel tank, covers, Garmin electronics, synthetic teak decking and an Admiral trailer, it can make a good case for that second boat. ■

WHAT WE THOUGHT

FOR

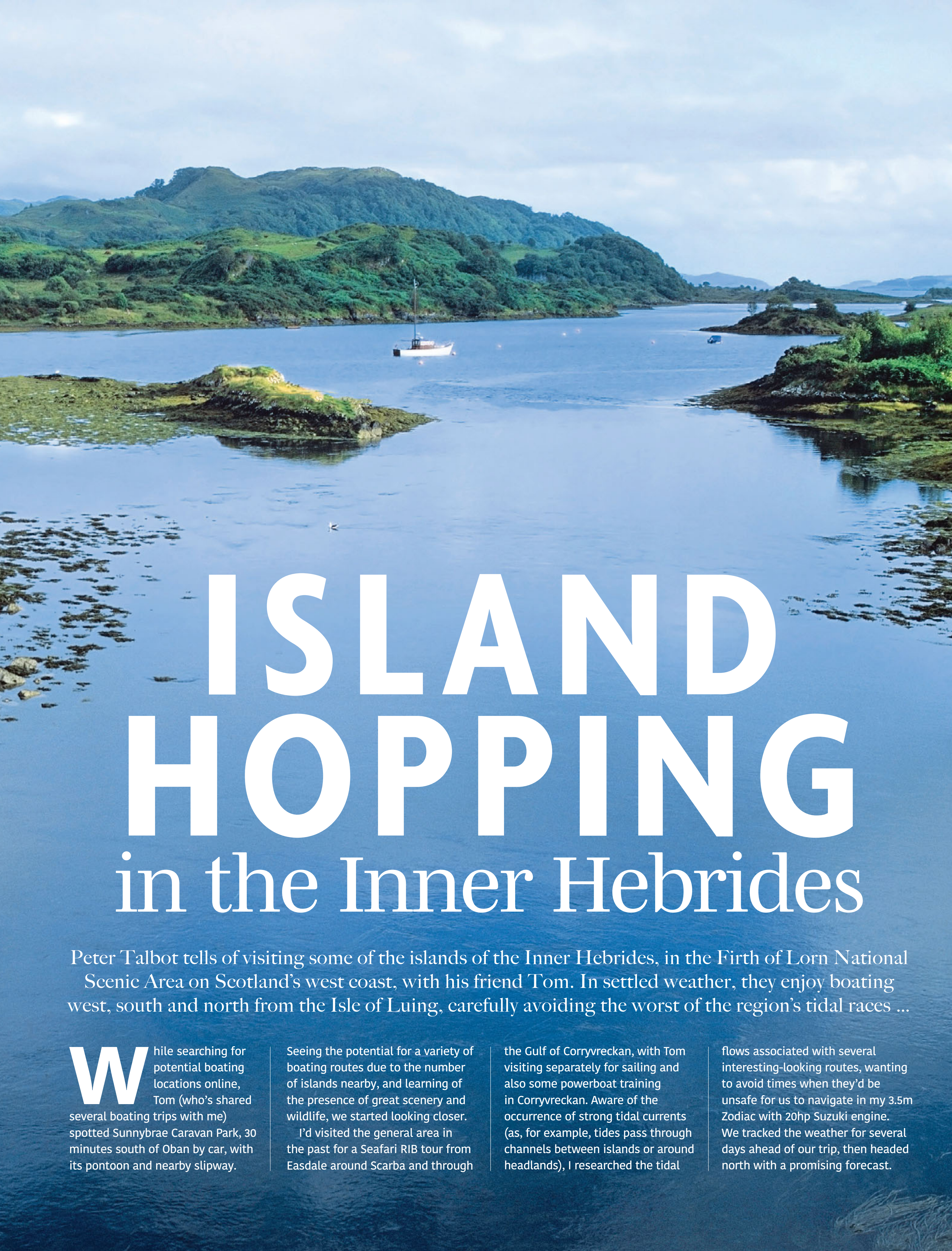
▲ Good performance
▲ Low planing speed
▲ Stability
▲ Solid construction
▲ Plenty of deck space for a 4.2m boat
▲ Finish
▲ Hypalon sponsons

AGAINST

▼ Cable steering - hydraulic steering, though not crucial, would be a bonus for some.

GRAND
EVINRUDE

Seil island, Argyll
Scotland - © iStockphoto



ISLAND HOPPING in the Inner Hebrides

Peter Talbot tells of visiting some of the islands of the Inner Hebrides, in the Firth of Lorn National Scenic Area on Scotland's west coast, with his friend Tom. In settled weather, they enjoy boating west, south and north from the Isle of Luing, carefully avoiding the worst of the region's tidal races …

While searching for potential boating locations online, Tom (who's shared several boating trips with me) spotted Sunnybrae Caravan Park, 30 minutes south of Oban by car, with its pontoon and nearby slipway. Seeing the potential for a variety of boating routes due to the number of islands nearby, and learning of the presence of great scenery and wildlife, we started looking closer.

I'd visited the general area in the past for a Seafari RIB tour from Easdale around Scarba and through the Gulf of Corryvreckan, with Tom visiting separately for sailing and also some powerboat training in Corryvreckan. Aware of the occurrence of strong tidal currents (as, for example, tides pass through channels between islands or around headlands), I researched the tidal flows associated with several interesting-looking routes, wanting to avoid times when they'd be unsafe for us to navigate in my 3.5m Zodiac with 20hp Suzuki engine. We tracked the weather for several days ahead of our trip, then headed north with a promising forecast.

DAY 1 Peter at the Helm. Heading across the Sound of Luing, with the Grey Dogs behind us. Lunga to the right and Scarba to the left.

After a provision and fuel stop in Oban, we'd soon driven south and over the Clachan Bridge onto the Isle of Seil. Arriving at Cuan Sound, a five-minute car ferry ride took us over to the Isle of Luing, with Sunnybrae Caravan Park being only 200 metres from the ferry landing.

Observing the direction and speed of the tidal current in Cuan Sound, while unpacking the car and setting the boat up, allowed me to roughly verify my earlier research and calculations. Launching that evening near slack water, we moored to Sunnybrae's pontoon overnight.

With our first full day afloat having the best forecast of the days ahead, we decided on heading west towards the uninhabited Garvellach islands. A sunny blue sky gave excellent visibility towards Easdale as we departed from the northern entrance to Cuan Sound. Turning west in near perfect sea conditions, with only a gentle wind, we could clearly see the Garvellachs 3 miles away. Passing south of Bono Rock and north of the Island of Belnahua, the crossing was straightforward and gave us time to start identifying the islands of varying size and height (often appearing to overlap from our perspective) to the south.

Arriving at the Garvellachs, we passed north through the narrow channel separating the islands of Dun Chonnuill and Garbh Eileach, spotting a resident red deer high up on very steep ground as we turned west. After travelling a couple of miles down the northerly side of the islands, enjoying views north to Mull, we passed back to the southern side, between the small islands of Sgeir Leth a' Chuain and Eileach an Naoimh, through a little chop. Continuing down Eileach an Naoimh, we landed in the narrow Port Chaluim Chille near the remains of the Christian monastery. It fascinated us to

With our first full day afloat having the best forecast of the days ahead, we decided on heading west towards the uninhabited Garvellach islands.

DAY 1 Tidal flow in the Grey Dogs.

DAY 1 Anchored for lunch, off Luing at southern end of Shuna Sound.

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think of monks using this natural (so presumably largely unchanged) landing place possibly as far back as 1400 years ago. Above the small pebbly beach, the ruins include a well, underground cell, chapel and burial areas, and are looked after by Historic Scotland.

Back aboard, and after seeing the southern tip of the island, we headed north up the archipelago, then east towards Luing, pausing to admire Fladda Lighthouse from the south. We travelled down Luing Sound, and, reaching the end of Lunga, approached the Grey Dogs channel, sitting between Lunga and Scarba. At the easterly entrance, the tidal flow towards us appeared a little stronger north of the Eilean a' Bhealaich islet, so we kept to its south and observed the pattern of the flow before approaching closer. At the western end of the islet, the flow was such that water appeared to be stepping down over rocks. This fanned out and slowed, and we noticed small mini whirlpools appearing in it periodically. Keeping out of the stronger current, we practised ferry-gliding towards Scarba, before passing through the Grey Dogs on slow-moving, smooth water, emerging into the spectacular bay at its western entrance and spotting a seal in the water. After admiring the view of the higher ground on Scarba, we passed back through the channel, observing the area from the opposite direction.

We crossed Luing Sound and stopped for lunch at anchor off the western shore of Shuna Sound. A tranquil spot, we noticed a passing gannet overhead, and in the water, jellyfish and another seal. Continuing north up Shuna Sound, we completed our circuit of Luing, returning to the caravan park having gone around the top end of the island of Torsa, and spotting a number of seals hauled out on the small islets west of Torsa.

Day two arrived, and with another good forecast and more sun, we headed round the northern tip

DAY 1 **The ruins of the monastery on Eileach an Naoimh**

Flada lighthouse

With such scenery, wildlife and history, it's easy to see why this area is so popular with boaters, kayakers and other water users.

Looking South from the monastery on Eileach an Naoimh, towards Jura and Islay.

Boat in the 'Port Chaluim Chille', Eileach an Naoimh

Tom at the helm, making our way north, up the SE side of the Garvellachs

of Torsa, and south, crossing the opening of Loch Melfort, which was a little choppy. We stopped briefly at Craobh Marina, then continued south, heading to the island of Rèisa Mhic Phaidean, landing in the small bay on its northern side. A short walk after lunch gave impressive views in all directions, and Tom spotted what he thought was an orchid (possibly a northern marsh orchid) and some interesting geological features.

Underway again, we continued to Craignish Point, then down the islands a little to the south. Turning north to start our journey

Preparations and considerations

Comprehensively describing a 300-mile west coast route from the Isle of Gigha to near Ullapool, I'd found Simon Willis's Scottish Sea Kayak Trail a very useful reference for an earlier boat journey (Arisaig to Sligachan; see PBR Issue 132), so I returned to it again ahead of this trip. For the section I was interested in this time, it countered the presence of 'some notoriously tricky waters' with 'but, with accurate tidal planning, these can be among the most enjoyable of the trail'. While briefly mentioning more adventurous kayaking options such as the Grey Dogs and the Garvellachs, the trail takes the 'inside' passage, closer to the mainland, providing a lot of information on tidal flows, points of interest and facilities. Calculating tidal flows for a number of locations ahead of our visit (and noting we'd be on neap tides), I gathered additional information from various sources including Navionics charts and OS maps, identifying potential day cruise options for both good and not so good weather.

With the nearest petrol station to the Isle of Luing being a 30-minute drive north to Oban, we made sure we had all the fuel we needed for the boat before boarding the ferry to Luing.

We followed the weather forecasts for a few days ahead of, and then throughout, the trip, comparing a number of forecasts. Leaving Sunnybrae's pontoon at roughly slack water for Cuan Sound each morning meant that after about six hours afloat, we also returned around slack water.

Using both Navionics' UK electronic chart and the RYA SafeTrx app on my smartphone (in a clear waterproof bag) was extremely useful. The Navionics chart showed our position, live tidal data (including direction and speed) at fixed points, buoyage and charted depth (helpful even in the shallow-draughted Zodiac, particularly in narrower channels). The SafeTrx app allowed us to log our daily start and estimated finish times, plus a waypoint, for safety purposes and for friends to follow our progress if they wished via a link. Out on the water we kept a close eye on conditions (wind speed and direction, wave height, tidal effects etc.) and were always aware of where our closest shelter was.

The Isle of Luing

Situated just south of the Isle of Seil, Luing is 1.5 miles wide and extends 6 miles further south. The majority of Luing's resident population of around 160 live in the village of Cullipool, on the north-west coast. As one of the Slate Islands, Luing saw quarrying until the mid-1960s at Cullipool, Port Mary and Tobernochy. Cattle (the famous pedigree Luing herd) and sheep farming, lobster fishing and tourism are now the main sources of income on Luing.

The Atlantic Islands Centre in Cullipool is an excellent place for visitors to learn more about Luing and the region, housing both permanent and temporary exhibitions, as well as a shop selling books and locally made souvenirs. Its licensed cafe serves cakes made on the island, and hot food including bar meals (check bar opening times). The Isle of Luing Stores and Post Office is located on the road into Cullipool.

A guide to eight walks on Luing is available locally and a series of interpretation panels around the island explain the sites of interest. Watch out for cattle on the island while driving or on foot.

DAY 2 **Moored on Island of Reisa Mhic Phaidean for lunch**

back, rather than retrace our steps, we headed out towards the island of Reisa an t-Sruith (west of Craignish Point), roughly halfway between Craignish Point and Jura. Approaching in good conditions, we agreed to continue across, towards the Gulf of Corryvreckan approximately 3 miles away, for a closer view. As at the Grey Dogs the day before, we wanted to supplement our earlier checks of tide and weather forecasts by observing their combined effects from a safe distance, before we got too close. We knew we had the

DAY 2 **Rock folds near Maol Buidhe, south east Scarba**

Panoramic view of Oban
- © iStockphoto

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Cullipool sign on Isle of Luing

option of returning the next day if we weren't completely happy with the conditions we met.

Approaching the entrance to the Gulf of Corryvreckan, we saw several large complete 'rings' of ripple-sized (so too small to have any real effect on the boat) circular standing waves. The largest we saw was a ring perhaps 50 metres in diameter, with very flat water in the middle.

Conditions closer included some patches of slightly rougher water, but there was plenty of smoother water in the northern part of the gulf entrance. We continually assessed the environment to ensure we'd spot any significant changes. The boat and engine comfortably handled the conditions present at the time, and as this location was one of the trip's highlights, we made sure we swapped the helm several times to share the experience.

The cliffs north of Easdale contain a variety of geological features, which we paused to admire from the water.

Aware that the surface could well be livelier further inside, we decided not to transit west through the gulf. Instead, turning east, we saw the impressive caves and almost 90-degree rock folds just above the

BELOW: 'Self-Heal' growing in the Marsh grass. It is edible: the young leaves and stems can be eaten raw in salads.

Gylen Castle and Port a'Chaisteil in sunset light, Isle of Kerrera, Scotland - © iStockphoto

ABOVE: **Atlantic Islands Centre**

shoreline, below Maol Buidhe, as we passed round the south-eastern tip of Scarba. We returned to the caravan park via Shuna Sound and the top of Torsa as we'd done the day before.

Having boated west and south on the first two days, we chose to go north on day three. High cloud had now replaced the sunshine, but good conditions continued. The shoreline cliffs north of Easdale contain a variety of geological features, which we paused to admire from the water. We crossed to the southern end of the island of Kerrera, into a slight headwind, and on seeing the impressive Gylen Castle we decided to stop for lunch. We came ashore at the small bay just west of the castle and left the boat at anchor in the shallows, just off the pebble beach. Looking around the castle, we had a few spots of rain (fortunately the only rain of the three-day trip), and we ate our lunch just above the beach. A feral goat descended to the beach, nonchalantly walking between us and the boat. The island of Kerrera stretches 4 miles south

The Garvellachs

Four main uninhabited islands (Dun Chonnuill, Garbh Eileach, a' Chuli and Eileach an Naoimh) make up the 4-mile-long chain of the Garvellachs (Isles of the Sea). Their citation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest highlights their geology, including the 650 million-year-old Dalradian rocks, an extensive limestone pavement and sea cliffs, which together provide a range of habitats for some limited-distribution plant and fern species. Dun Chonnuill is the most northerly of the Garvellachs and closest to the Isle of Luing (being 3 miles west of Luing), and its ruined castle is thought to have been built around 1400 by Maclean of Duart. Garbh Eileach, the largest of the islands, is home to sheep and red deer. At the southerly end of the Garvellachs lies Eileach an Naoimh, on which the ruins of an early Christian monastery stand, possibly originally founded by St Brendan in around 500AD. It's thought that the Viking raids on west coast monasteries in the ninth century probably led to Eileach an Naoimh being abandoned, but that it might have been a place of pilgrimage a couple of centuries later.

Sunnybrae Caravan Park

There's been a caravan site on this part of Luing, overlooking Cuan Sound, since the 1960s, although with six static caravan holiday homes and two luxury lodges, the site is smaller now. Sunnybrae is well appointed and is rated as a four-star small holiday park. Our four-person static caravan was finished to a very high standard and fitted with gas/electric central heating, gas oven/hob, microwave, fridge, TV, two bedrooms and a full-sized bathroom, all of which we felt made it luxurious. You can check availability for your chosen time and duration and book online. The family-owned site is run by Mike Barlow, who's a boat owner himself. Mike asks to be told in advance if you're bringing a boat so he can check whether it's suitable for the local area (he'll want to clarify the boat's size, seaworthiness and engine power) and that you're fully aware of the region's tidal currents (which, for example in Cuan Sound, can run at around 7 knots). Mike has installed a pontoon off the caravan's slate beach, for which there's a small charge to help with costs. There's a short, narrow concrete slip on the site, which may have been alright to hand-launch a boat the size of my Zodiac at high tide, but we used the island's wide ferry slipway, just 200 metres away. Mike told us that some visitors launch from the ferry's other slipway (on Seil), leaving trailers there, with some leaving cars too, travelling over as foot passengers. Communal facilities at Sunnybrae include a washing machine/tumble dryer, Wi-Fi, books and DVDs to borrow, local information, a freezer full of local meat and fish products, bike hire and a drying room.

The Island of Easdale - iStock

shelter the bay at Oban, and is 1 mile wide at its widest point. Cattle and sheep are farmed, with tourist attractions including the Tea Garden and Bunkhouse in the south and Waypoint Bar and Grill in the north.

On top of the standard preparations and safety considerations, particular care needs to be taken regarding the region's weather and tidal currents ...

A feral goat near the boat, whilst stopped on Kerrera, near Gylen Castle

There are no metalled roads on Kerrera, and only residents can bring vehicles onto the island. Two ferries operate to the island and there's a walking route that many visitors choose to undertake.

Lifting the anchor, we continued up the west coast of Kerrera, enjoying great views over to Mull 3 miles away. The headwind increased but wasn't enough to cause any problems, and before too long we were round the top of Kerrera and nearing Oban Harbour. Around 20,000 large commercial vessels use this entrance every year, so following advice we'd read we hugged the outside edge of the buoyed channel, listening in on VHF

DAY 3 South of Oban, after leaving the Sound of Kerrera, visible in background

USEFUL WEBSITES

Sunnybrae camping:
http://www.oban-holiday.co.uk/

Isle of Luing:
https://isleofluing.org/

Oban Harbour information:
https://www.obanharbour.scot/

Isle of Kerrera:
www.isleofkerrera.org

The website of Craignish Cruises, containing a lot of information about the Gulf of Corryvreckan:
https://whirlpool-scotland.co.uk/

Zodiac Nautic:
https://www.zodiac-nautic.com/

Suzuki Marine:
https://marine.suzuki.co.uk/

Looking down to our mooring, from Gylen Castle, Isle of Kerrera

AFTER DUSK PRESS BUTTON IN WAITING ROOM BEFORE SAILING TIME TO SUMMON FERRY

Sign on Luing ferry slipway

Luing ferry 'MV Belnahua' about to discharge on the Luing slipway

Time spent preparing and planning helps keep you safe and allows you to get the most out of your time afloat.

Channel 12. After a brief stop at Oban Marina, we started our return journey south, via the quieter route of Kerrera Sound. With the wind on our backs we made good progress, choosing to pass through Easdale Sound, as we had not visited before.

Back at Sunnybrae, and after a rewarding three days afloat, we got the boat off the water and started packing up.

Closing thoughts

Great weather and careful planning enabled us to enjoy three memorable days of boating from our base on the Isle of Luing, covering around 30 miles each day and just less than 100 miles in total. As on my Storfjord trip in Norway (PBR Issue 153), being

The Gulf of Corryvreckan

Host to what is said to be the world's third-largest whirlpool, the Gulf of Corryvreckan is a channel, half a mile wide at its narrowest point, that lies between Scarba to the north and Jura to the south. The famous whirlpool and other effects are created when strong tidal flows (which can run at 8.5 knots) interact with the varying topography of the seabed, and wind conditions, within the constraints of the channel. Depths plunge to over 200 metres near the eastern end of the gulf, contrasting significantly with its western end, which includes a pinnacle of rock that rises up to within 30 metres of the surface.

Gylen Castle

Sitting high above the sea (on a raised-beach geological feature), the tall tower of Gylen Castle is an impressive sight. The artist Joseph M.W. Turner must have thought so too, as when he visited Gylen in 1831 it inspired him to dedicate 25 pages of his sketchbook to drawings of the castle.

Duncan MacDougall of Dunollie built the castle in 1582 in a location offering excellent views to the south. With the tower comprising four levels and some notable architectural facets, including the oriel window above the main entrance and several stone carvings, the castle footprint also originally included a walled bailey. Gylen Castle and the Royalists stationed inside were attacked during the Covenanting Wars in 1647 by the soldiers of General Leslie. The resulting siege ended with the burning and looting of the castle and the massacre of the defenders. The Brooch of Lorn, thought to have been previously owned by Robert the Bruce, was stolen from the castle but ultimately returned to the MacDougalls in 1822. Conservation work took place between around 1995 and 2006, and visitors (free entry) can get inside the tower and climb the spiral staircase to the first floor.

Clachan Bridge, the 'Bridge over the Atlantic', connecting the Isle of Siel with the Scottish mainland - istockphoto

Time spent preparing and planning helps keep you safe and allows you to get the most out of your time afloat.

based in a single location allowed trips in different directions, giving opportunities to see a lot of the region (my other multi-day trips have generally involved a one-way journey from A to B over successive days). The presence of the many islands on this trip offered a number of options, including different 'out' and 'back' routes, and while their headlands and the channels between them needed to be treated with care regarding tide, wind and swell effects, the islands also had the potential to provide shelter if we'd needed.

The Zodiac's small draught made landing on the islands we visited straightforward, allowing us to approach close in and step into shallow water with the boat still afloat. In good conditions, the 20hp Suzuki allowed us to cruise comfortably at speeds of 13 knots and reach 20 knots if we wanted, using a total of approximately 20 litres of petrol over the three days.

Staying in a well-appointed caravan offered us new levels of comfort and space compared to camping on my previous multi-day boat trips (making even the fundamentals such as charging smartphones, cameras and the VHF easier). It's something I'd consider again for the future, while acknowledging that carrying a tent aboard can give more options and flexibility and helps reduce costs.

With such scenery, wildlife and history, it's easy to see why this area is so popular with boaters, kayakers and other water users. On top of the standard preparations and safety considerations, particular care needs to be taken regarding the region's weather and tidal currents, which can be very strong in places. Time spent preparing and planning helps keep you safe and allows you to get the most out of your time afloat. ■

The boat moored up on pontoon infront of caravan

Peter Talbot

PBR features contributor **Peter Talbot** has owned small Zodiac inflatables for 15 years, enjoying a range of trips with friends in the UK, Norway and Sweden, and has an RYA Advanced Powerboat certificate.

Away from boats, he's ski-toured in Svalbard and on the Greenland Ice Sheet, and undertaken scientific research on the Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica.

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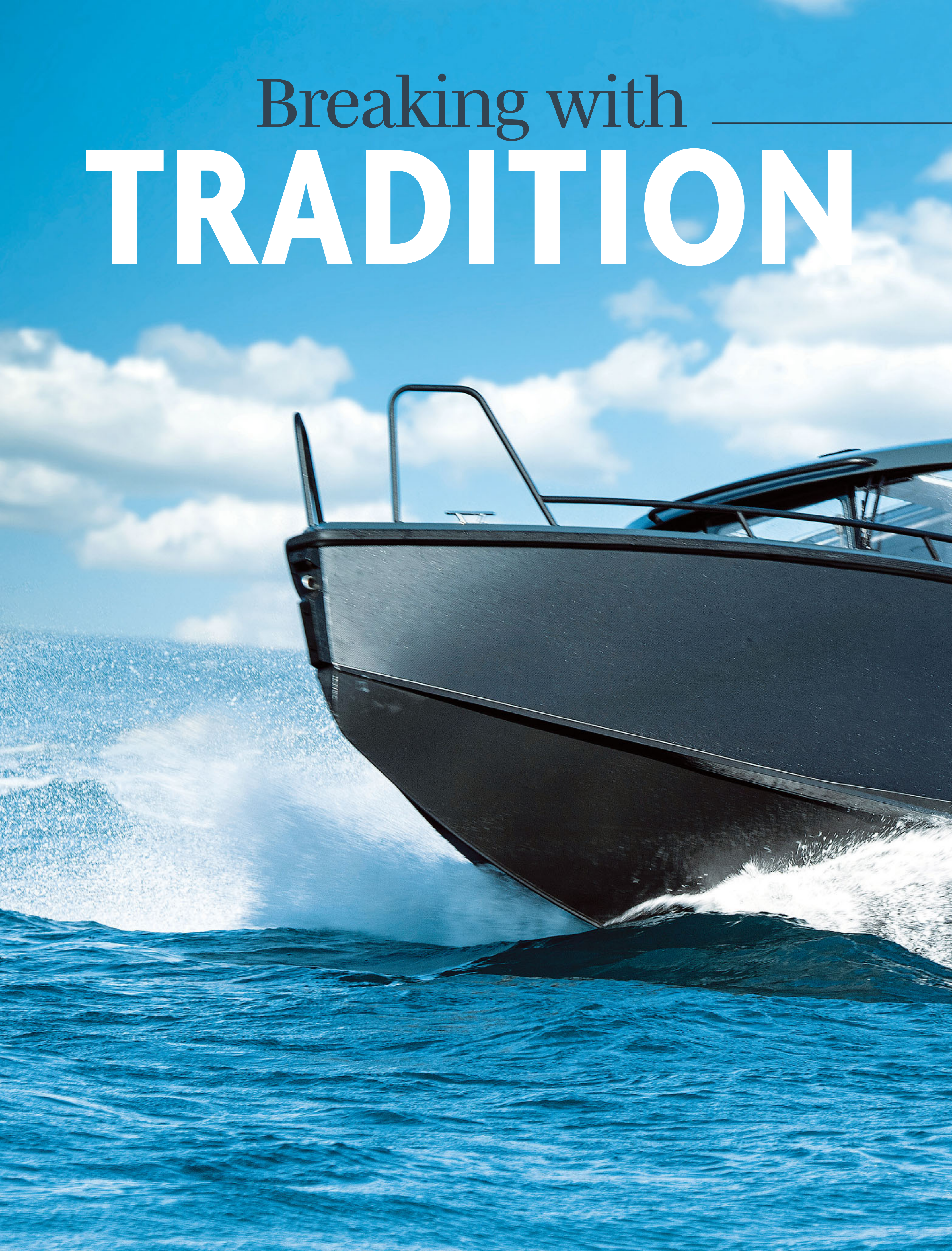

The sharing industry is growing in every area, including holiday homes, planes, cars, offices, tools and much more. Boats are no exception. HMS interviews Alexandre von Heeren, MD of Mandaris Marine, a company that has recently launched the MemberBoats Club of Malta - an initiative responsible for offering a modern-thinking and creative alternative to traditional boat ownership ...

I think I'm right in assuming that the basis for a successful boat club and/or charter operation surely has to be its location. What makes your particular location so special?
The MemberBoats Club is all about being able to enjoy the essence of boating with none of the hassle typically associated with ownership. Being a small island in the middle of the Mediterranean, boating is as natural for Malta as skiing is for Switzerland. An important part of that experience happens at the marina. Our offices overlook the beautiful Grand Harbour in Valetta with its historic fortifications, the ideally located Laguna Marina and the surrounding restaurants and shops. It was therefore the logical choice for the club's base, and the fact that this marina operates as an exclusive private members' club makes it even more of a perfect fit. Each member gets complimentary access to the restricted Laguna Marina Club, even when not boating. Hence, our discussions with the management and the owners of Laguna Marina quickly led to the decision to join forces and start the club together - in essence, merging the experiences and knowledge of both. I have always been a firm believer that Malta and Switzerland are an ideal fit in many ways, and not only because we both share the same colours in our flag and the cross. We can now prove that the traditional Swiss service approach and the Maltese marine experience create something unique.

LAGUNA MARINA

In terms of your clientele, is it mostly made up of Maltese nationals or do you attract overseas boaters as well?
The MemberBoats Club primarily targets Maltese residents as members. While Malta is very touristic, the tourism can't be compared to that in the South of France or in the Balearics, at least not today. Also, tourism is very seasonal and potentially volatile, even in normal times without corona. This doesn't mean that overseas boaters wouldn't be welcome - they are more than welcome - but that for the club to make business sense, we believe in the local market. Also, the MemberBoats Club is a year-round operation. Enjoying a beautiful day on the water in winter is something exceptional. Not many overseas boaters are likely to be around in wintertime.

We can help potential members to get the necessary training to obtain a licence.

That said, we already have some ideas to launch a MemberBoats Club based in Switzerland and possibly elsewhere. Any potential base will, however, have to offer a solid local market, overseas boaters being a plus. Still, I don't exclude the possibility that we may be surprised about the attraction of our offering to overseas boaters or similar clubs elsewhere in the world, should we

The MemberBoats Club is all about being able to enjoy the essence of boating with none of the hassle typically associated with ownership.

Every member will need to have proper nautical qualifications to join.

come to the conclusion that some kind of a reciprocal offer would make sense.

What are some of the key benefits associated with the type of ownership and service you provide?
The key benefit is simple: we buy the boats and the equipment, we deal with the marina, we register the boats, we insure the boats, we clean the boats, we fuel the boats up, and we maintain and repair the boats. The members enjoy just the essence of boating, with brand-new, safe and exclusive dayboats that will be replaced approximately every two years. Every boater knows that the two happiest days in a boat owner's life are the day they buy the boat and the day they sell it, after reality has set in. It is our objective to solve this problem by offering our members the excitement of joining the club, using these great boats over and over, and looking forward to additional boats or new boats to replace the existing ones, but

Boats fully prepped and ready to go on Pinto Wharf

Purpose built marine facilities for club members

The MemberBoats Club is about sharing.

without the hangover effect. We will also listen to the wishes of our members when ordering new boats.

Can you tell us why you have chosen the XO and Axopar brands as your primary craft?
We wanted cool-looking boats that are extremely seaworthy and of high quality, boats that are as versatile and multi-purpose as a Swiss knife. Every boat is a compromise, but we believe that these models come extremely close to the perfection we seek. At the same time, the two brands remain sufficiently different to offer our members distinctive experiences. It was also a coincidence that the shareholders of the Laguna Marina are also the local dealers for Axopar (and for much bigger boats), while Mandaris Marine secured the dealership for XO Boats in Malta. We obviously share a similar taste when it comes to boats. It was just another perfect fit. We will have T-top boats and cabin boats, something for every taste and weather. Also, both brands will be enlarging their range with new models, which will enable us to grow our offering. Boating is about passion and we have a passion for these boats.

Part ownership associated with club-style membership is becoming increasingly popular. How effective is it, would you say, in terms of bringing new people into the pastime of boating?
The sharing industry is growing in every area, including holiday homes, planes, cars, offices, tools and much more. Boats are no exception. The concept of the MemberBoats Club, however, is not based on part ownership but on prepaid use on the basis of an annual membership. Boat ownership is generally expensive and associated with its share of trouble. We have no doubt that our offering will not only be a valid alternative to ownership but also a gateway to boating for new people. We will therefore also offer training so that potential members can obtain a boating licence and the necessary competences, so that we will feel comfortable letting them use the boats in safety. We are also already considering an entry-level offering for younger people that would otherwise not have access to boats, for example through renting, because

We wanted cool-looking boats that are extremely seaworthy and of high quality, boats that are as versatile and multi-purpose as a Swiss knife.

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of their age. We will further offer a 'Just Jet Ski' membership. It is our clear intention to lower the level of the entry barrier to boating and at the same time raise the level of nautical competence.

Do you have overseas clients who are existing boat owners but who join your scheme in order to give them access to a foreign boating experience?

While we have clients that are boat owners, at this stage we are focusing on the Maltese market. We will obviously promote our offering across our clients and professional network. This is another reason why we believe in this offering, since it enables us to promote boating outside of the traditional channels. Besides this, we may also explore possibilities for entering into agreements with similar boat clubs so that our respective members can enjoy new boating areas, should our members be interested in this. Obviously, when the MemberBoats Club has added other locations, the members will be given access to these too.

Can you describe the coastal cruising that your destination has to offer?

Malta consists of three islands: the main island of Malta, Comino and Gozo. There's plenty to experience - exploring the different natural harbours of Malta, enjoying time in an otherwise not accessible bay, or having fun at a beach club or popular anchoring for those that prefer buzzing areas. Malta offers it all. Comino and Gozo are in dayboating distance and also offer something for every taste. Comino offers fantastic bays like the Blue Lagoon, where many private boats (and also touristic excursion boats) anchor in crystal-clear water, but also calmer bays. Gozo's main harbour has many restaurants, and small bays can be explored around the island

First class club facilities ashore.

Biog: Alexandre von Heeren

Alexandre is the owner and managing director of Mandaris, a trust and consultancy company that focuses on providing asset structuring services to corporate and private clients out of Switzerland and Malta. The Mandaris Group recently added Mandaris Marine Ltd to their group of companies. Mandaris Marine represent XO Boats in Malta.

After having worked for several large banks, Alexandre joined Mandaris in 1998 and chaired the Swiss Association of Trust Companies (SATC) from 2012 to 2019. Even though boating has been a passion since childhood, this background and his education as a lawyer do not typically lend themselves to the establishment of a boat club. In fact, it is rather the result of a coincidence - Mandaris having their Maltese offices overlooking the Laguna Marina in Valetta and Alexandre having come across a similar project abroad. In reality, however, the activities of Mandaris and the boat club have more in common than it might seem at first glance: both are all about high-quality services and the members are often professionals with whom Mandaris would otherwise work.

Members will benefit from the strengths each can contribute.

while following the cliffs that drop vertically into the water, leading to various caves.

What sort of qualifications and levels of experience are necessary to join your ownership scheme, and what training are you able to provide for clients?
Every member will need to have proper nautical qualifications to join. We can help potential members to get the necessary training to obtain a licence. Also, we require an initial assessment drive to ensure that a member is able to safely use the boats and has the required knowledge. However, we are also offering the option of hiring a skipper on very reasonable terms for those that don't have a licence (yet) or just wish to be entertained.

Are there any specific matters that people should be aware of before committing to a scheme such as the one you offer?
The MemberBoats Club is about sharing. Even though the number of members per boat is limited to ensure availability and we offer the opportunity to each member to reserve a couple of boating days ahead, it may happen that the preferred boat model is already booked on a specific day, or exceptionally that all boats are booked, primarily at weekends or on public holidays. This is the downside. Otherwise, bookings can be made up to 48 hours in advance. Spontaneous after-work boating is also possible.

Finally, the regulations and the types of boats we offer limit the use of the boats to Maltese coastal waters. Spending a weekend in Sicily is unfortunately not an option, at least not until we will have expanded our fleet with larger boats.

Can you describe what makes your club ownership unique, and why you would recommend it to our PBR readers?
The combination of a marina that is itself a private club with access to fantastic boats through the MemberBoats Club membership is exceptional, and not only in Malta. We also offer to organise the catering, be it sandwiches or something more exclusive. It is all about service. In Malta there is currently nothing comparable. Boaters that aren't boat owners will not be able to rent comparable boats, since most dayboat charter firms offer RIBs only. I personally love RIBs, especially when strongly motorised, but while these are a lot of fun, this is something different. Boaters that are boat owners will usually not have a brand-new boat, fully equipped, every couple of years. And finally, the combination of the partners of the MemberBoats Club with their wide experience and track record in the marine industry on the one hand, and decades in the financial services industry on the other, is definitely unique. Members will benefit from the strengths each can contribute.■

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CLOSER TO HOME

HMS grabs a mini 'exclusive' with Premier Marinas to find out their new Agapi Boat Club.

Premier are one of the UK's leading marina providers, so what was the motivation behind the company wishing to establish a boat club network here in the UK? Has it been market led?
The way people consume is changing and we are seeing rapid growth in the sharing economy across many sectors. There is no reason why that shouldn't include the marine sector, and we think that boat sharing will become increasingly important to the way that people access boats and boating.

Agapi are a respected Swedish brand of RIB, so how did you come to choose this make of craft over and above others - those perhaps closer to home?
Our main reason for choosing Agapi is that they have an established boat club concept that is boat brand agnostic. For example, Agapi recently introduced the Saxdor product to the club range. Our participation in the club gives us the opportunity to influence the brands that form part of the club offer. Premier have already introduced a local brand, Ring - a product designed and manufactured in Chichester - to the Agapi Boat Club. Premier have ordered their first 6.8m Ring RIB for their boat club.

Do you see the boat club attracting a new clientele that Premier would otherwise not see, and who might be your typical boat club member?
Absolutely. The attractiveness of boating as a pastime far exceeds actual participation rates, which suggests that many people are put off by the cost of owning a boat and acquiring the competency to go boating safely. The boat club addresses these issues.

What do you foresee as being the key attractions/benefits for those contemplating taking up this opportunity?
All the benefits of owning a boat without any of the hassle.

In your opinion, do you see this type of boat club 'ownership' of craft being beneficial or detrimental to the new boat market generally? If it's the former, please elaborate.
Overall, we expect this will be beneficial as it will increase the number of people able to participate in a boating lifestyle.

It also seems that boat manufacturers believe clubs will be an important market for their products, as is evidenced by Brunswick's recent acquisition of Freedom Boat Club in the USA.

Bearing in mind you already offer very comprehensive facilities, what added benefits are Premier able to bring to the table for their boat club members?
The most obvious benefit is that we will be able to let our club members access club boats at any of our marina locations across the south coast. Although we are starting at Swanwick on the River Hamble, we expect to roll out the club concept to more of our sites over time.

What type of take-up and growth do you anticipate over the course of the next three years?
Our target is quite simple really: to be operating at three sites within three years.

Is the Agapi Boat Club evidence of the fact that marina operators need to change with the times and be very much more than just facility providers?
That is a personal decision for each operator to make. For us, trying new things is important.

Lastly, to what degree have Premier had to change how they operate in light of the COVID crisis?
Like most companies, we have adapted our working practices to ensure that all our stakeholders are able to be safe from the virus at all times, and we are delivering all our usual services as normal. ■

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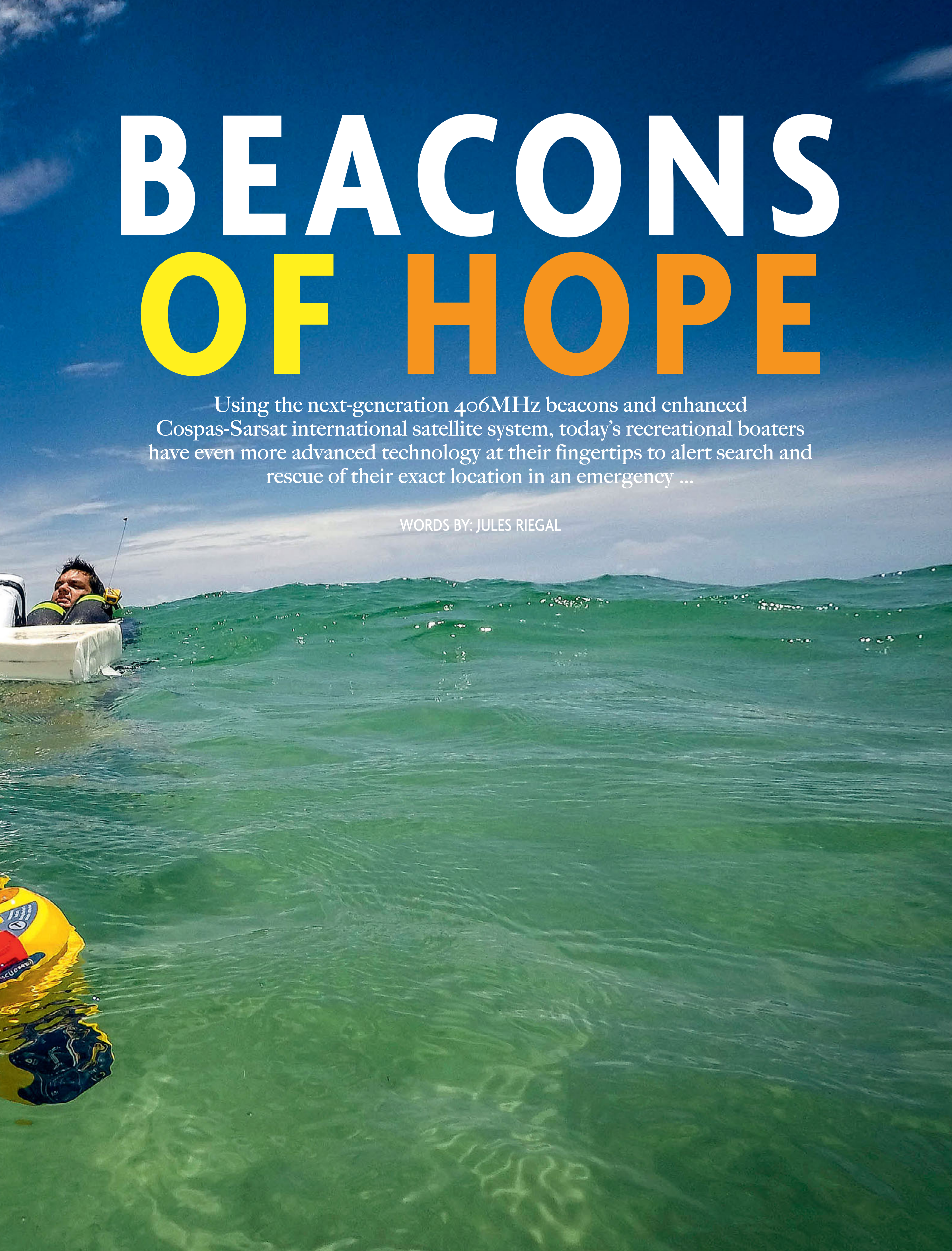

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Using the next-generation 406MHz beacons and enhanced Cospas-Sarsat international satellite system, today's recreational boaters have even more advanced technology at their fingertips to alert search and rescue of their exact location in an emergency ...

WORDS BY: JULES RIEGAL

Just a few decades ago, the notion of an average leisure boater carrying a pocket-sized beacon to sea that could communicate with a satellite network to summon rescue almost to their exact location at the press of a button would have seemed unfeasible. Faced with the grim scenario of a sinking vessel, medical situation, injury or other life-threatening emergency while out on the water and isolated from immediate help as recently as the 1980s, the chances of a favourable outcome would have been considerably less than today. There will always be risks for anyone heading out to sea, whether just off the coast or further offshore, which every prudent sailor will acknowledge, but while many advances in safety equipment have transformed the way we can enjoy boating, the Cospas-Sarsat international satellite system and life-saving 406MHz beacon technology are perhaps among the most revolutionary and significant. Now, by adding search and rescue equipment - either a personal locator beacon (PLB) or emergency position indicating rescue beacon (EPIRB) – to a safety kit, the chances of survival are greatly improved should the worst happen.

No longer limited to the use of adventure or ocean-crossing sailors, 406MHz PLBs and EPIRBs are affordable and accessible for a huge range of motor and sail boaters, kayakers and other outdoor sports participants across the world. All will wish to carry the devices for reassurance only, with the hope of never using them, but in reality, thousands of lives have been saved after beacon activations. Not only do PLBs and EPIRBs help ensure the successful rescue of the beacon owners, family or crew, they also ensure that the role of search and rescue (SAR) authorities is made considerably easier. Today, leading beacon manufacturers are developing and introducing to market even more advanced technology and features within the latest beacons, while the next-generation MEOSAR satellite system is supplementing the existing network to further enhance signal detection and location accuracy to ensure that everyone can feel safer at sea.

Leading beacon manufacturer and safety advocate ACR Electronics and sister company Ocean Signal are at the forefront of promoting 406MHz technology, promoting an annual '406Day' on 6th April since 2013 to raise awareness and celebrate the lives saved using beacons. ACR also created a groundbreaking SurvivorClub programme, which provides a free replacement beacon for all its members and helps to provide compelling, first-hand evidence that 406MHz beacons should be part of every boater's safety kit. This educational resource features hundreds of testimonials from real-life survivors who have activated their beacons.

Users must check the expiry dates to ensure that the EPIRB or PLB will function correctly when required in an emergency.

ACR
406 SENT!
ResQLink
VIEW
T
GPS
GIVE CLEAR VIEW TO SKY
PERSONAL LOCATOR BEACON

ACR Reslink View PLB

Since 1982 more than 48,000 people have been saved using 406MHz beacons

'Safe boating is everyone's responsibility and there is now affordable technology available to recreational boaters to alert search and rescue teams of your exact location should the unthinkable ever happen,' said Mikele D'Arcangelo of ACR Electronics. 'At ACR Electronics, we are dedicated to developing new and innovative beacons to make sure this technology is accessible to as many boaters and other users as possible. But we are also committed to highlighting to beacon owners that these essential safety devices should be properly registered and maintained so that the beacons can be relied upon to function correctly when activated. The Cospas-Sarsat EPIRB system and its use of 406MHz signals saves lives, but it is a technology that requires responsibility.'

Revolutionising boating safety

The international Cospas-Sarsat programme is a satellite-based SAR distress alert detection and information distribution system that was initiated in the late 1970s. The system relies on signals received on the 406MHz frequency to pinpoint position and direct rescue authorities to the scene of an emergency on land or at sea. To transmit

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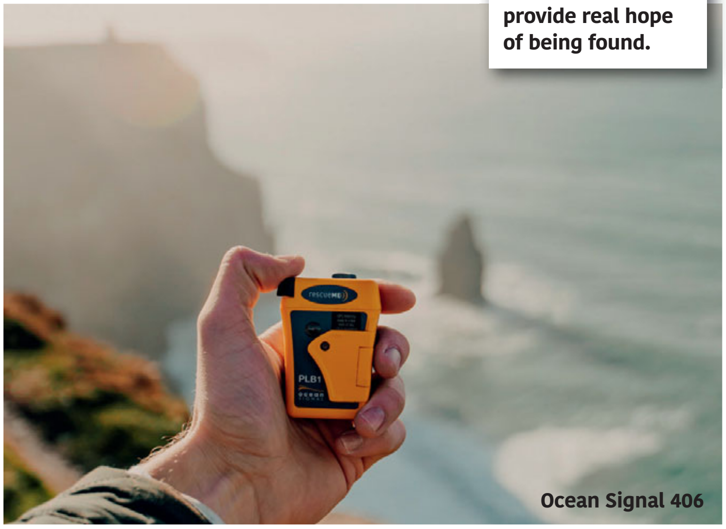
this signal, the sailor or outdoor adventurer in a life-threatening situation simply activates their 406MHz radio transmitter – either a PLB or EPIRB for mariners, or an emergency locator transmitter (ELT) for an aircraft – setting in motion a complex process involving satellites, ground-monitoring stations and rescue coordination centres that will eventually result in regional rescuers locating the survivor. Firstly, the 406MHz emergency message containing the user's Unique Identification Number (UIN) is transmitted to the LEOSAR (polar orbiting) and GEOSAR (geostationary) satellite systems and, fully operational by 2021, the new medium-altitude earth orbit (MEO) system. Ground receiving stations, or local user terminals (LUTs), then forward the location to the Mission Control Centre (MCC), which refines the beacon position and generates an alert message combined with the registration information from the database for the appropriate Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC). The RCC contacts the persons listed to verify the emergency before it dispatches the closest SAR forces to launch a mission and pinpoint the beacon using the 121.5MHz homing signal.

With '406Day' celebrated last month on 6th April, it is a good time to consider updating and checking safety equipment.

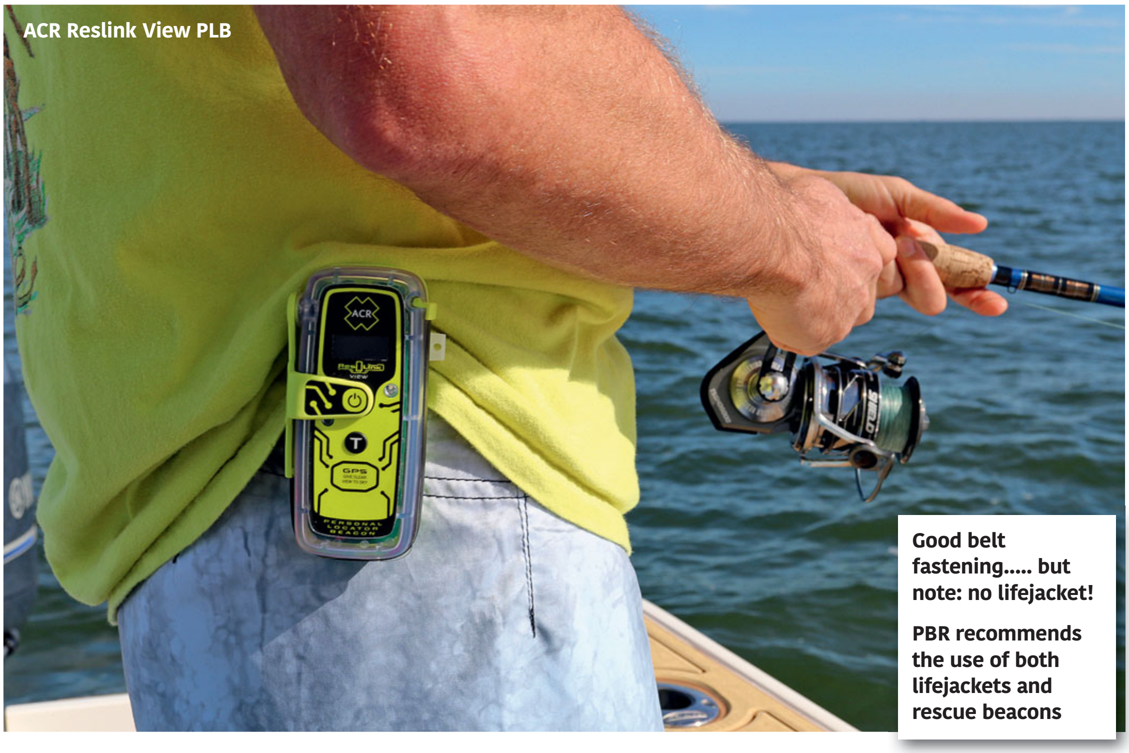
The development of Cospas-Sarsat's next-generation Medium Earth Orbit Search and Rescue (MEOSAR) system has further revolutionised the search and rescue process. Twenty-four EU-launched Galileo navigation satellites will carry second-generation SAR transponders for the Cospas-Sarsat system at medium earth orbit altitude to supplement the existing LEOSAR and GEOSAR systems. The increased number of satellites offers much faster signal detection, greater location accuracy, strengthened coverage and greater reliability to improve alerting times for distress beacon owners in emergency situations. Most approved beacons are compatible with the next-generation satellites, ensuring they will offer the near-instantaneous signal detection and transmission enabled by the global MEOSAR satellite transponders and upgraded ground station components. The Galileo satellites will also allow second-generation alerting technology to be introduced, such as the ability to send a return link signal in the form of a confirmation message back to beacons acknowledging that the signal has been received.

ACR Electronics 406

PLBs and EPIRBs provide real hope of being found.



Ocean Signal 406



ACR Reslink View PLB

Good belt fastening..... but note: no lifejacket!

PBR recommends the use of both lifejackets and rescue beacons

ACR's Mikele D'Arcangelo added: 'Since 1982, more than 48,000 lives have been saved worldwide using emergency distress 406MHz beacon signals and the Cospas-Sarsat system. The 406MHz frequency has become the internationally recognised distress frequency used by modern signalling devices to quickly beam GPS coordinates to orbiting satellites, allowing a position fix through Doppler shift to acquire a location. From 1st February 2009, satellite processing of distress signals from the older 121.5 and 243 MHz emergency beacons was terminated worldwide. When a 406MHz beacon signal is received, SAR personnel can retrieve registration database information. For this reason, it is vital that beacon owners register their EPIRB or PLB with their local authority. If your details change, such as your

Ocean Signal's rescueME PLB1 – the world's smallest personal locator beacon. A compact unit is good, but can also be easily dropped by cold wet hands.

Good location for a PLB, here shown with the OceanSignal rescueMe PLB1

phone number, address or boat, you must update the registration to include all current contact information, emergency contact information and details regarding the specific trip plan and any medical conditions of the owner or members of the party – invaluable information for the coastguard. As Cospas-Sarsat is maintained and operated by governments all over the world, there is no subscription fee required for owning a 406MHz EPIRB, PLB or ELT.'

For anyone carrying a PLB, size and weight are critical to avoid any impediment to movement when attached to a life jacket or clothing.

Next-generation emergency beacons

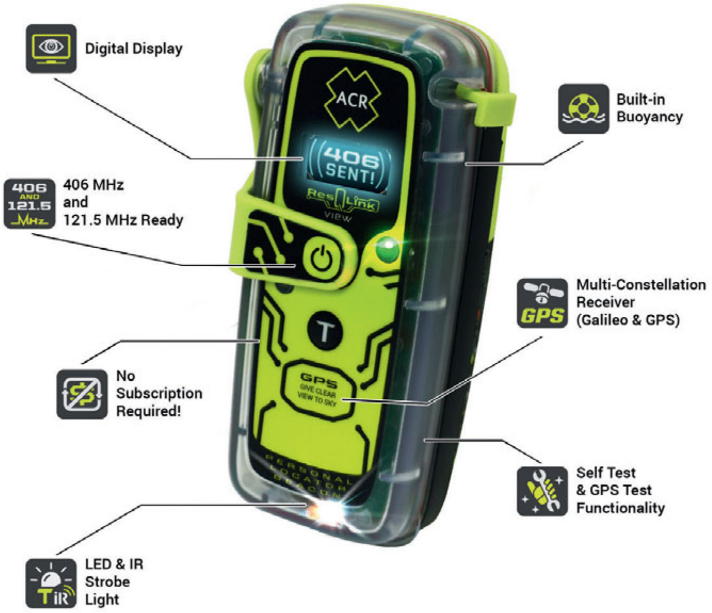
As more advanced and user-friendly beacons become available, it is even easier for boaters to equip themselves and their boat with the best 406MHz devices to assist the search and rescue services. Available for a few hundred pounds, EPIRBs, which are registered to vessels, and PLBs, worn by individuals, have become smaller, include enhanced features and are easier to use and test. These beacons should be distinguished from AIS-broadcasting personal beacons, which are programmed to alert your own vessel or other AIS-equipped boats in the vicinity, but do not send a distress message to a satellite network.

For anyone carrying a PLB, size and weight are critical to avoid any impediment to movement when attached to a life jacket or clothing. Ocean Signal have a heritage of launching the smallest maritime safety products into the market. The 'world's smallest PLB', the Ocean Signal rescueME PLB1, has proved popular since its launch, weighing just 116g, with dimensions of 77mm (H), 51mm (W) and 32.5mm (D). One of the latest introductions to the market is ACR Electronics' new ResQLink View with digital display technology. Adding reassurance for the user, all the beacon's operational activities, including GPS coordinates, operating instructions, usage tips, transmission bursts and battery power, can be clearly viewed. This unit provides further innovations, including a protected activation button located away from the test button, multiple wearable mounting options including a belt clip and oral inflation clip for easy access in an emergency, and an easier-to-release antenna enclosure. It even offers the option of an ACR Skin with the purchase to customise the beacon. The new ResQLink series also incorporate a multi-constellation receiver utilising both the Galileo Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) and the GPS Satellite network for faster location and improved accuracy.

ACR Electronics' ResQLink View PLB.

'The development of the next-generation ACR ResQLink PLBs is unique because we have listened to real-life survivors who have activated our beacons,' said Mikele. 'Their experiences were integral to improving the design and functionality of our PLBs, which are affordable, yet technologically advanced, devices that will save more lives and aid the rescue services in locating and helping casualties. As the only company that incorporates a digital display in our beacons, we are now able to offer this technology at a significantly lower price in the ResQLink View to ensure it is an option for more of our customers who require an additional level of peace of mind.'

For the vessel, an EPIRB comes with either a Category 1 (automatic deployment) or Category 2 (manual deployment only) bracket. The Category 1 bracket is designed to release an EPIRB when the hydrostatic release unit (HRU) in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the bracket is submerged in water. In an emergency, the EPIRB will release from its bracket, float to the surface and alert search and rescue that you need help fast. EPIRBs in the Category 2 bracket need to be manually deployed and activated. At 30% smaller than other EPIRBs, the Ocean Signal SafeSea EPIRB1 Pro Category 1 device is one of the newest on the market and complies with IMO regulations that require an automatic release housing to be provided for mandatory fitted EPIRBs.

Ocean Signal's new SafeSea EPIRB1 Pro.

With power comes responsibility

With '406Day' celebrated last month on 6th April, it is a good time to consider updating and checking safety equipment. Both ACR and Ocean Signal offer the following advice to ensure best practice for beacon ownership, and provide a free replacement beacon for all owners of their PLBs and EPIRBs who activate their device in an emergency.

Register and update your 406MHz beacon registration

All beacon owners should register their device with the appropriate authorities. UK users of EPIRBs and PLBs should register their details on the UK Beacon Registry at www.gov.uk/406beacon. This free and simple registration will speed up a rescue and provide search and rescue with information about you and your vessel, which is vital in an emergency. In other countries, contact your local authority. Details can be found at www.406registration.com/countriessupported.aspx. Make sure your contact information is correct and your emergency contact's information is accurate. Double-check that your beacon registration number matches your beacon.

Check your 406MHz beacon battery expiration dates

Users must check the expiry dates to ensure that the EPIRB or PLB will function correctly when required in an emergency. When selecting your beacon, key considerations include the added convenience of replaceable batteries and the reassurance of a long battery operating life. Ocean Signal and ACR Electronics lead the industry in these areas of innovation. The rescueME PLB1 has a seven-year battery life, while the rescueME EPIRB1 has an even longer battery life at a massive 10 years between routine replacements.

Console positioning good but could be knocked off accidentally.

Test your 406MHz beacon

You should test your EPIRB using the 'self-test mode' once a month to monitor the 406MHz RF power, as well as the 121.5MHz homer RF power, synthesiser lock and battery voltage under load. Ocean Signal also recommend regular inspection to ensure that: there are no obvious signs of damage, including checking the state of the antenna; the mounting is secure on the bracket or float-free housing; the lanyard is not attached to any structures; the HRU in the case of a float-free housing is within the specified expiry date; and the EPIRB and mounting are cleaned, using only a damp cloth. It is also recommended to carry out routine testing of your PLB to ensure it is in good working order, using the specified 'Test' key. Ocean Signal suggest you do not test the GPS receiver more than once a year as this uses significant amounts of battery energy.■

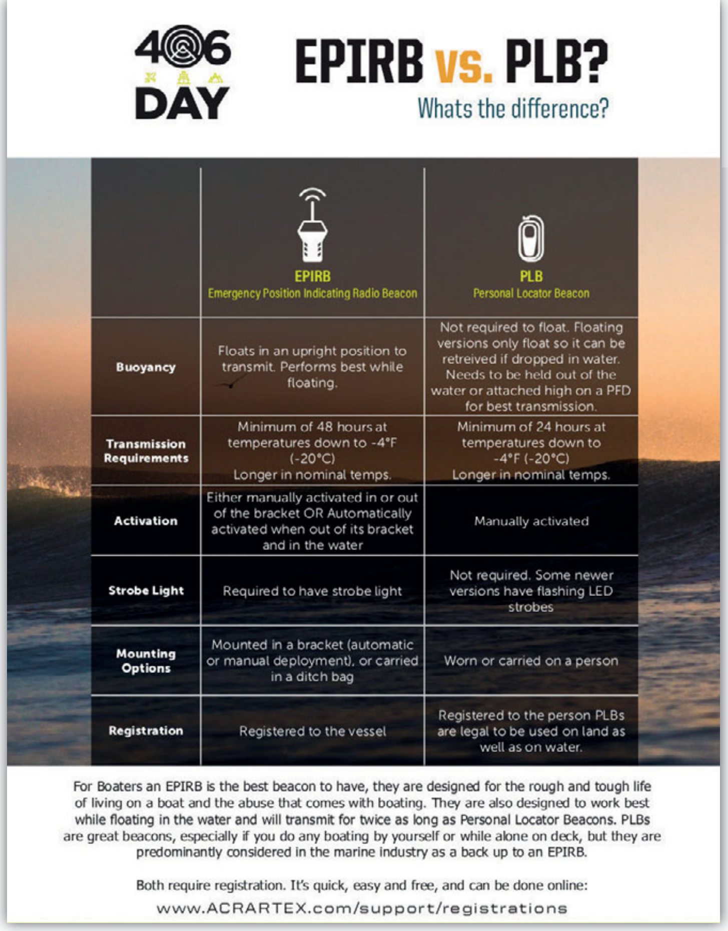
For more information

ACR Electronics – www.acrartex.com

Ocean Signal – www.oceansignal.com

Cospas-Sarsat - https://www.cospas-sarsat.int/en/

SafeSea
EPIRB1 Pro



406 DAY

EPIRB vs. PLB?

Whats the difference?

	EPIRB Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon	PLB Personal Locator Beacon
Buoyancy	Floats in an upright position to transmit. Performs best while floating.	Not required to float. Floating versions only float so it can be retreived if dropped in water. Needs to be held out of the water or attached high on a PFD for best transmission.
Transmission Requirements	Minimum of 48 hours at temperatures down to -4°F (-20°C) Longer in nominal temps.	Minimum of 24 hours at temperatures down to -4°F (-20°C) Longer in nominal temps.
Activation	Either manually activated in or out of the bracket OR Automatically activated when out of its bracket and in the water	Manually activated
Strobe Light	Required to have strobe light	Not required. Some newer versions have flashing LED strobes
Mounting Options	Mounted in a bracket (automatic or manual deployment), or carried in a ditch bag	Worn or carried on a person
Registration	Registered to the vessel	Registered to the person PLBs are legal to be used on land as well as on water.

For Boaters an EPIRB is the best beacon to have, they are designed for the rough and tough life of living on a boat and the abuse that comes with boating. They are also designed to work best while floating in the water and will transmit for twice as long as Personal Locator Beacons. PLBs are great beacons, especially if you do any boating by yourself or while alone on deck, but they are predominantly considered in the marine industry as a back up to an EPIRB.

Both require registration. It's quick, easy and free, and can be done online:

www.ACRARTEX.com/support/registrations

ADVICE FOR BEACON OWNERS

Check the battery expiration date: each beacon is marked with the month and year when the battery needs to be replaced.

Update your beacon registration: make sure your contact information is correct and your emergency contact's information is accurate to assist search and rescue should you ever need to activate your beacon.

Double-check that your beacon registration number matches your beacon.

Test your beacon.

Beacon owners should be comfortable with their beacon, so do a self-test and make sure it is working perfectly.

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REBUILDING BULLFINCH

Mike Taylor samples the delights of a Brooke Marine day launch ...

It's a glorious sunny day on the River Thames, the iconic edifice of Windsor Castle acting as the perfect backdrop. I'm on the water sharing the front bench seat of a beautiful classic launch owned by enthusiast Constantinos Franceskides; it's truly the perfect boating experience. Wearing the mandatory straw boater, other people wave their approval as we motor by - it's that kind of craft. Built by J. W. Brooke, she's a river cruiser of enormous charm and charisma.

> **First time in the water and I realised that the body of the distributor was turning through vibration from the engine.**

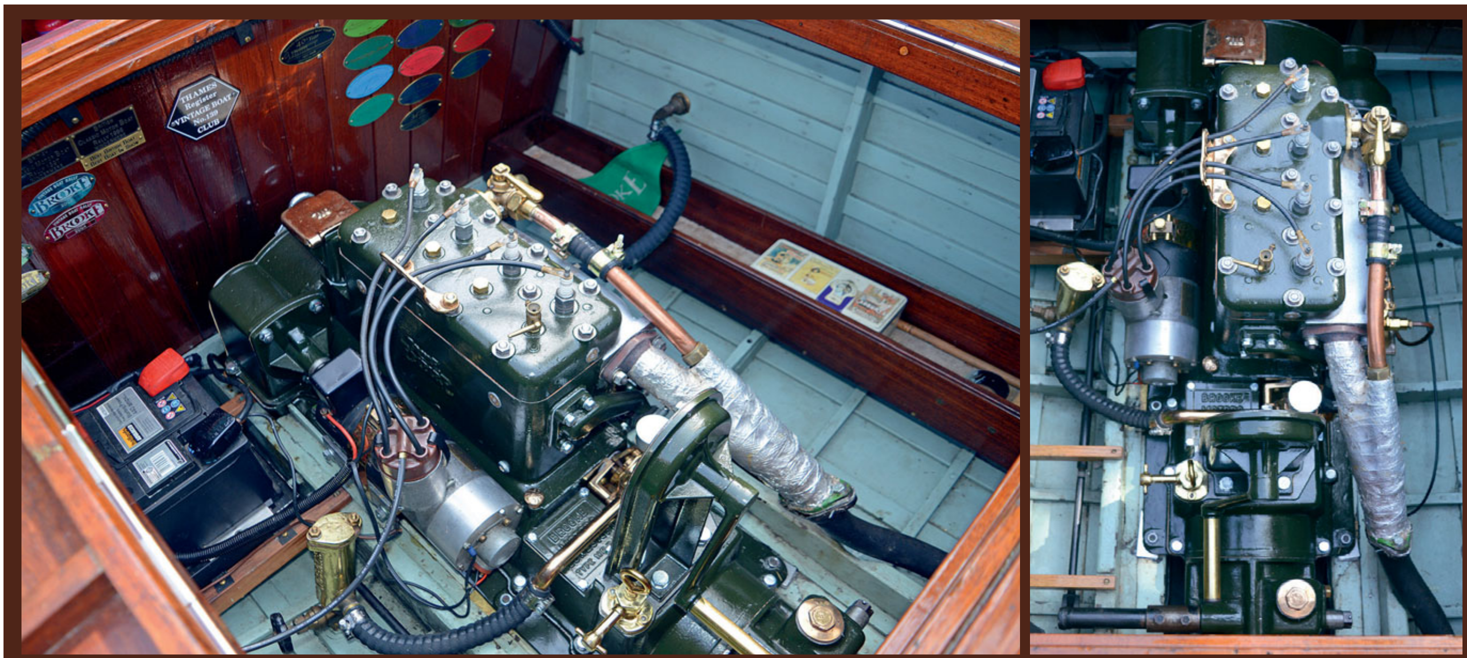
With the River Thames within easy reach of its home Bullfinch can be launched into its natural environment close to Windsor Castle

John Walter Brooke was the son of an iron founder, and in 1870 he laid out the works for Robert Warner & Co. before going to Adrian, Michigan to learn the foundry business. In 1874, he returned to the UK and opened his own foundry business in Lowestoft, naming it the 'Adrian Works'. By 1887 he was manufacturing compound and triple-expansion engines for fishing, coastal and other craft. In 1899, he built the company's earliest internal combustion 2-stroke engine, and in 1902 the company built its first 3-cylinder Darracq 'Genevieve'-type car, followed by a 40hp model in 1908.

Soon after this, Brooke diversified into boatbuilding, subcontracting this work to a yard on Oulton Broads. In 1909, Brooke exhibited a 35ft estuary cruiser, and in 1911 the company opened its own yard on the north side of Lake Lothing nearby using engines made at the Adrian Works. Car manufacturing was terminated in 1913, although the company continued building car engines until 1938, with over 7,000 produced.

In 1914, a 4-stroke side valve engine was developed for marine use, and during WWI the company established a munitions factory. With hostilities over, the yard was extended to cater for building a wide range of craft, including river cruisers such as the type featured here, a 60ft teak model exported to South America and open sports launches. In 1940, the company was bought by Harry Dawsett and renamed 'Brooke Marine'. During WWII, the yard built and serviced motor launches and landing craft.

After the war, a new yard was built on the south side of the freshwater lake and from then on the business grew markedly, aided by the blossoming trade in holidays on the Broads. Later, the company became nationalised and was enveloped into British Shipbuilders. In 1992, the company ceased business and was relaunched as

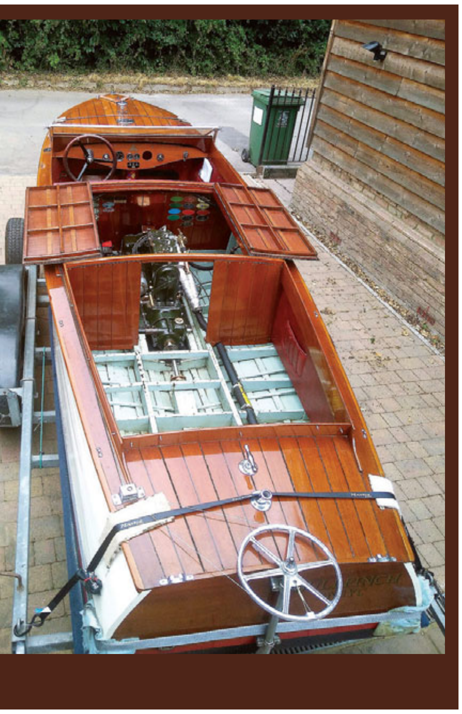

Lifting the engine 'bomb doors' provides easy access for servicing the 1.7 litre 16 hp side valve Brooke Marine engine, gearbox and propeller shaft.

Brooke Marine Yachts Ltd, trading until 2009 when the assets were bought and the properties leased to a diverse range of industries.

As we continue our way upriver, Constantinos explains the family's interest in boats. 'My father and grandfather both had a hand in nurturing my enthusiasm for the sea, and boats in particular,' he acknowledges. 'In Cyprus, the weather was always ideal for boating, so going out on my father's Fletcher speedboat with its 140hp outboard engine was always the weekend treat.'

Constantinos's first boat was a trimaran powerboat driven by a 25hp Johnson outboard. 'Then we bought a 24ft cabin cruiser with a V6 OMC Cobra diesel,' he continues. 'We also had a Four Winns cruiser, and during my first year at university in the UK we bought a Bayliner and I went back to Cyprus for the summer holidays to enjoy water sports.'

More recently, now married, Constantinos turned his attention back to boats. 'When we found out that we were expecting our first



'I gave her a good inspection and quickly realised the huge amount of craftsmanship that had been lavished on her construction.'

The fuel tank is located in the bow and bunkering is achieved by removing the chrome finished screw cap

The beautiful hand crafted cockpit with its analogue engine management instruments, leather bound helm wheel, forward and reverse astern control and floor mounted throttle

child I decided to sell my race car and buy a boat so I could share it with my family. My wife and I like the older gentleman's launch type of craft and I began looking around.'

Leafing through an old copy of Classic Boat magazine, he found what he was looking for. Bullfinch was a Brooke Marine launch of 1931 vintage advertised on the Henley Sales and Charter website in 2013. It was priced at £22,500 together with a spare engine and had recently been revarnished. 'However, when I came to buy her the advertisement was already several years old. I then went on eBay and found Bullfinch was still available. John Brooke, great-grandson of the founder, had put her in a friend's barn and readvertised her. However, many people counselled that I should stay well away from her as Bullfinch is very fragile. Of course, they're right. Unless you are careful you could destroy her in a heartbeat.'

'She had not been in the water for some time and wasn't in what you'd call concours d'élégance condition.'

Nevertheless, Constatinos was smitten, and in October 2016 he drove up to Wolverhampton with his family. 'I gave her a good inspection and quickly realised the huge amount of craftsmanship that had been lavished on her construction. She had not been in the water for some time and wasn't in what you'd call concours d'élégance condition. The controls are very simple, with a foot-operated throttle, side-mounted gear selector and wheel steering. We started the engine and that was it - I made an offer. We left with Bullfinch in tow. John's last comment as we left was "Enjoy the boat and create memories".'

Bullfinch is typical of the day boat genre - bench seats fore and aft with the power unit amidships. Built of mahogany planking on oak frames, she has a semi-displacement hull running to a flat deadrise astern. The engine is a Brooke Marine-built Empire Runabout 4-cylinder side valve unit of 1.7L capacity driving a simple gearbox. Probably used as a rental craft based in the Lake District, Bullfinch was bought by John Brooke at an auction in Potter Heigham, 12 miles north-east of Norwich, during the 1990s. She was then sent to Trend Lock in Nottinghamshire for major restoration, which included repainting the hull creamy white. The entire underside, apart from the transom, was copper-sheathed. After a lay-off she went back into use in 1996, covering some 150 hours before being put up for sale.

With Bullfinch now based at Constantinos's home near the Thames, his first job was to have the hull repainted. 'First time in the water and I realised that the body of the distributor was turning through vibration from the engine. The grub screw threads had stripped, so I had to remove the distributor body and drill and tap new threads for replacement screws. Also, the water pump leaked, which is quite normal for a pump of this age.'

But things were set to become more serious. Constatinos quickly discovered that the cylinder head gasket was blowing. 'On investigation, we found the cylinder block and the head castings were corroded together. We tried several ways of separating them for repair, but without success. Finally, I fabricated a puller using angle iron. Gently, using copious amounts of WD-40, I turned the crankshaft sufficiently for the head to release. It was then sent away to a machine

Editor's note: Children should always wear a lifejacket. Powerboat & RIB always recommends wearing lifejackets whether at sea or on a river.

shop, and they told me the casting and machined surface were still good. This meant it was the cylinder block that was the culprit, and at that point I decided to undertake a full engine rebuild.'

The flywheel, cylinder block and gearbox casing is formed from a single casting, so the rebuild had to be given to specialists. The task was entrusted to Chase Engines of Silverdale, Newcastle, who took on the challenge even though this was their first experience of working on a marine engine. 'It's all about knowing your capabilities and your limitations,' he asserts. Nowadays, when Constantinos needs help, he tends to call upon Marlow Boat Services of Taplow.

Overall, the work would take Constatinos some time to complete, and Bullfinch was only back in the water in the summer of 2018. 'We ran the engine in over six hours, cruising from Windsor to Henley for the Traditional Boat Festival, at which we won the Dean Marine Trophy for engine installation and smooth running.'

'I must be one of the very few people that launch and recover such an old boat every time I take her out,' he muses. 'Each time I have to manually grease the water pump and the packing gland, the prop shaft has to be connected to the gearbox drive using four nuts and bolts, and the carburettor needs priming as there's no automatic choke facility for starting. At least keeping her at home makes it more cost-efficient and practical as I can do what I want on the boat without the hassle of huge mooring fees.'

Finally, I ask Constatinos about his plans for the future. 'I am concerned about the continued availability of spare parts,' he confides. 'Also, I accept that people with the specialist knowledge required to work on boats like Bullfinch are quickly disappearing. However, knowing that the engine is now running well, I want to enjoy her as much as I can and replicate with my son what my father did with me in encouraging my enthusiasm for boating.' ■

BULLFINCH SPECIFICATION

Built: 1931
Hull: Mahogany planking on oak frames
LOA: 18ft
Beam: 5ft 6in
Draught: 1ft
Engine: Brooke Marine 'Empire', 1.7L 16hp side valve
Speed: 16 knots
Number made: 32

Our thanks go to Constantinos Franceskides for his help with this article. Anyone wishing to join the Brooke Marine Owners' Club should contact: info@brooke-oc.com

Editor's note: Powerboat & RIB always recommends wearing a lifejacket, either at sea or on the river.

TESTED TO THE LIMIT

THUNDER CHILD

SAFEHAVEN MARINE

PBR invites Frank Kowalski of Safehaven Marine to share his first-hand knowledge of one of South-West Ireland's most challenging areas of coastline and finds out how these waters have not only influenced his company's all-weather boat designs but also the skills he and his team have acquired over 20 years of sea-trialling among some of the most extreme tidal seas the Atlantic has to offer.

Particularly during the winter months, the entrance to Cork Harbour, open to the full fetch of the mighty Atlantic Ocean, can produce some of the most extreme sea conditions to be found anywhere around the British Isles. There are two main factors that influence these Irish waters: first, the ebbing tide, and second, the shoaling waters over the infamous Harbour Rock, which lies at the entrance to the harbour off Roche's Point Lighthouse, right in the middle of the seaway between the western and eastern channel entrances.

On a spring ebb tide, a large body of water from the inner harbour and estuaries around Great Island is forced between Roche's Point and Weaver's Point, a distance of approximately three-quarters of a mile between the two headlands. On a spring tide, the speed of the ebb can reach 2.5 knots, and this can cause a tidal race at the entrance to the harbour, which even in moderate waters can create very rough conditions right in the centre of the channel. In a storm, the full width of the harbour can become nothing short of a maelstrom, typified by standing, steep, closely spaced breaking waves.

The worst or most dangerous period occurs approximately two hours after the turn of the tide and two hours before slack water. In a full-blown storm of force 10 and above, particularly one that has been blowing for more than 12 hours, the entrance may well become unnavigable throughout the middle of the ebb, and breaking waves 10 metres high are not uncommon.

Built for the job

At Safehaven Marine, we specialise in building vessels for the offshore professional market and as a company have become known for how seriously we take the post-production testing of all our craft. It's important that every aspect of a boat has been put through its paces prior to the client handover. Of course, judging the optimum time for a serious sea trial session has to be done with care, because while we want to test craft to their limits, at the same time we have to be responsible and make an informed judgement based upon local knowledge of the likely conditions as well as the operational parameters of the craft in question. On several occasions we've simply had to patiently bide our time and wait for the tidal run to moderate a little. Then, when it has subsided adequately, we've been able to run out through the centre of the harbour entrance over Harbour Rock to take on the first of the breaking seas.

However, upon making the decision to enter the 'zone', you really are committed well and truly, because changing your mind and turning around is simply not an option. In fact, trying to undertake such a manoeuvre would put the vessel in jeopardy of being placed broadside to the seas. A change of course of this type can only be considered upon clearing the harbour entrance and tidal race - and gaining the relative safety of open water. As many of you will know, the difference in sea state and the ferocity of waves between an ebb and flood tide in an area that produces a tidal race can be the difference between night and day, particularly in a wind-against-tide situation. In fact, I would estimate that even in a force 6 on a spring ebb tide, the Cork Harbour race creates waves that are more challenging to navigate through than a force 8 in open water.

Ebbing tides in severe weather conditions will cause the waves in the race to become steep and violent, with the result that breakers form, 'spilling' and 'tumbling'.

Local knowledge

Local knowledge is invaluable when negotiating challenging coastal waters. Lifeboatmen depend upon it, despite all the electronic navigation equipment their vessels carry. With this in mind, locals here appreciate that at the mouth of Cork Harbour the tidal flow is never static, and hence the white water constantly shifts according to the state of the tide. Nevertheless, there is an area east of the cardinal buoy, extending just north of the E2 buoy, where an eddy forms, and crucially it's here where more settled water can be found. So for instance, when undertaking sea trials with two boats, it tends to be in this eddy that the boat taking its turn as the camera vessel will take up position and hold station - just within the outer fringes of the less turbulent zone beyond the race.

The second factor that influences conditions at the entrance to Cork Harbour is the shoaling water over Harbour Rock. Harbour Rock stretches approximately a quarter of a mile wide, west to east, and has a typical chart datum depth of just 22 feet. Nevertheless, it also has a dangerous smaller pinnacle, which at its shallowest point is a mere 14 feet below the surface! When the wave height exceeds 6 to 7 metres, the wave troughs can bottom out here, with the consequence that the seas break very heavily. Much like surf mounts and breaks in the shallowing waters of a beach, the waves over these rocks, characteristically, will have near vertical wave faces and heavy, plunging crests.

Troubled waters

Ebbing tides in severe weather conditions will cause the waves in the race to become steep and violent, with the result that breakers form, 'spilling' and 'tumbling'. However, it is the heavy, plunging surf-type seas that form over Harbour Rock that are undoubtedly the most dangerous of all. Nevertheless, it takes a quite prolonged storm - one that's been blowing for many hours down the course of a long, unhindered ocean fetch - to cause the seas to build to the point that they take on a low-frequency magnitude even greater than that normally seen. These can be killer seas, dangerous to all but the most capable and seaworthy of craft.

Though these seas tend to break in quite a predictable manner, in truth, where the sea is concerned, nothing is ever completely predictable. Out of nowhere, a breaking sea can rise and catch one off guard without any real warning. So before entering such water, it's critical to ensure that

SAFEHAVEN MARINE

Not surprisingly, it's when the wind blows from the south or SSW during a big storm that the swell becomes the biggest, resulting in huge breaking seas throughout this critical area.

everyone and everything are ready for the fray - hatches securely fastened, watertight compartments secured and crew strapped in. It's of course important for not only the helmsman but also the crew to remain vigilant and alert. Invariably, the danger zones of breaking or shoaling water can be identified by eye and thus avoided. But for lifeboats or other rescue craft that may be working at night or in poor visibility, having the luxury of being able to dead-reckon or navigate by eye may not always be possible - hence why, once again, local knowledge, and/or the use of electronic cartography, can prove invaluable in such instances.

In general, here at the entrance to Cork Harbour, the swell breaks first on the western side, east of W1 buoy, in a wide break and then continues to break right up to west of the cardinal buoy, thereby creating a 'surf zone' of white water at least a quarter of a mile long while storm conditions prevail. The second main break is on the eastern side, outside and to the west of E2 buoy. In the case of the first break, though the seas can be very high here, they usually don't extend as far in as they do in the western break. Lastly, a second break of the same wave sets occurs north of here just before the eddy.

When to push

Not surprisingly, it's when the wind blows from the south or SSW during a big storm that the swell becomes the biggest, resulting in huge breaking seas throughout this critical area. Taken steadily with a judicious hand on the throttles, even these can generally be traversed, though, if met absolutely head on - the caveat being that the vessel has to be built to withstand the likelihood of a green sea engulfing its entire front end. If the boat's wheelhouse windows or its foredeck and hatches aren't built to withstand such an impact, the likelihood is that the force will take these items clean out! Ideally, from a timing perspective, the preferred moment to punch on through these waves is either just before they break or directly after they've broken when they are 'spilling'. The

The best course of action when confronted by a seriously large breaker is to literally stop, so you have very little 'way' on.

worst moment is as they curl over and 'plunge'. But there is a need to be realistic about exactly how fast one can drive into a big head sea. The differences between a RIB or boat weighing even a couple of thousand kg are not comparable to the forces at play in the case of a vessel such as ours of, say, 20 to 30 tons. The shock loadings are massive when the latter lands heavily in a trough, and you simply can't afford to take a boat of serious tonnage for a flying lesson!

Local knowledge is invaluable when negotiating challenging coastal waters.

The best course of action when confronted by a seriously large breaker is to literally stop, so you have very little 'way' on. But you must ensure that you're absolutely dead square to the wave and, just as it strikes the bow, give the throttles a little burst of power to gain forward momentum without speed. Sure, you can expect to be thrown backwards even a boat's length as the wave hits, but this is preferable to flying off the crest to land heavily in the trough with all the resulting damage that might ensue. But remember, you only have a 10% margin of error to work with. If the vessel's bows are as much as 20% left or right of 90 degrees to the oncoming sea, the likelihood is that the boat will be knocked broadside. This is the most vulnerable position to be placed in as it will likely result in the vessel being knocked down. Unless the boat has an effective self-righting capability, such a rollover could prove fatal.

Before and away

When running before the seas, perhaps back into harbour with a westerly-going sea astern, it's just as important to remain vigilant. This is because a big sea can rear up and overtake you and, in the process, cause a broaching situation whereupon the boat is physically picked up at the rear and spun around to suffer a broadside and the inevitable capsize that follows. Simply put, power is the best defence against this danger, so bold use of the throttle is necessary to not only maintain a state of running before the seas but also to keep the bow of the craft lifted in its fore section and help its hydrodynamics perform to their optimum. When the waves are this big there is generally a fair distance between them, so the best course of action is to stay close to the wave in front, even sitting on its back if necessary so that when its energy is dispersed it happens in a manner that doesn't endanger the craft. That said, in order to take this evasive action, you will need a craft that is able to maintain pace with seas travelling at speeds often in excess of 20 knots. In any event, it's essential you keep a close watch astern, because behind your transom is where the danger mounts. I will, however, add this caveat, which relates specifically to the type of semi-displacement all-weather craft we build at Safehaven: if a big breaking sea is about to hit you astern, the best solution can be to slow right down, keep the boat's stern dead square to the wave face and then allow it to break over the boat to continue on its way. ■

SEA-TRIALLING AIMS

Safehaven Marine build 'all weather' lifeboats and pilot vessels. But what does 'all weather' mean? In our book, this means the boat has to be capable of operating in all weather conditions up to storm force 10 and/or 6- to 7-metre wave heights. Pilot boats, especially those operating out of Atlantic-facing ports and harbours, experience big seas regularly, often on a daily basis during winter months. Therefore, they need to be especially capable of dealing with heavy weather. On many occasions we've been sea-trialling offshore when our local pilot boat has passed by us to assist a ship boarding in 6- to 7-metre seas. I have tremendous respect for these crew and pilots, who have to head out to sea when almost all other craft are taking shelter. Imagine trying to come alongside a ship at night during a winter storm with visibility severely hindered by driving rain and flying spray in order to undertake a transfer when the rise and fall of both vessels could be as much as 6 metres. Both boats are rolling violently and now the pilot has to scrabble their way up a rope ladder! You can see why a pilot boat has to be made of sturdy stuff and be built to provide the most stable platform possible.

Undertaking sea trials in rough, storm-generated conditions has been, and continues to be, a fundamental part of our design and build process. As such, we always endeavour to test our boats in the harshest of conditions, often with the owners aboard. We consider it to be all part of the essential handover process, and we are lucky insomuch as almost always we have a second pilot boat or our own 'all-weather-capable' boat and experienced crew, acting not only as the camera boat but as a safety boat.

Over the course of the last 20 years, we have acquired what I consider to be a pretty unique insight into this incredible patch of wild water - one that can be as seductive as it is awe-inspiring. We owe it much, for it certainly has taught us volumes over this period, not only in terms of the intricacies and technologies of all-weather boat design but also the techniques involved in helming vessels successfully in extreme conditions and severe sea states of all kinds.

PART 2

NORTHWIND CHALLENGER REBUILD

Jonathan Peers continues his epic rebuilding of the *Northwind Challenger*

Photos by: Thomas Peers

Northwind Challenger
Northwind Challe
MARINER FourStroke 115
Northwind

With December now rapidly approaching, and my original four- to six-week timescale proving to be somewhat unrealistic, I knew I had to start making decisions on what I wanted, and work in an efficient manner.

The point of no return was gone the second I set to with the chainsaw, and with the seemingly insurmountable number of things to be done weighing heavily on my mind, it would have been easy to lose hope and give up.

My grandmother used to say, 'if a job's worth doing, it's worth doing properly!' Now, she was speaking as a retired headmistress, and somehow I failed to see her point in relation to my schoolwork, but curiously I found her words to be sound advice when it came to working on something I was actually interested in. With those wise words still ringing in my ears, even now, years after her passing, I decided that I wasn't going to rush and cut corners just to get the job finished. By making the best use of my time, I was going to ensure that I incorporated as many of my ideas as possible and make my modest little RIB the most practical I possibly could.

The rebuild continues

I left off last time having just installed the first two layers of 12mm marine plywood into the transom. This stiffened up the rear end of the boat and formed the basis of every other element of the build.

I, like so many other people, often look at my outboard bouncing around while underway and wonder just how it is that the transom doesn't just drop clean off under such load. Now, the engineer in me had already decided that I was going to spread the load from the engine through the hull – I just needed to decide how to do it. The rearmost part of my deck has always been something of a no-man's land - I mean, with the depth of the frame, and the outboard rigging protruding into the boat, it's an area that you simply can't walk around in or make use of. With that in mind, I was able to devote this whole area to the transom's structural components.

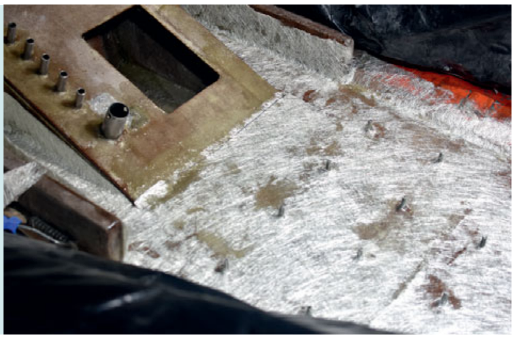
After much contemplation, and a few cups of strong coffee, the decision was made - I was going to build four reinforcing knees into the transom. The outer knees would be in place of the original ones, though extended further forward, providing a new mounting point for the front legs of the navigation frame. The additional knees would be installed either side of the engine mounting bracket – the area I feel is under the most stress from the loading imposed by this 165kg lump.

A further cup of coffee brought about a lightbulb moment ... In the last issue I pointed out that this hull was devoid of any kind of longitudinal reinforcement. These additional knees would rise as high up the transom as was practical to work most effectively, but then be located on the lower chine rail within the hull. How far forward should I extend the knees?

The rebuild has given this incredibly capable old girl a whole new lease of life ...

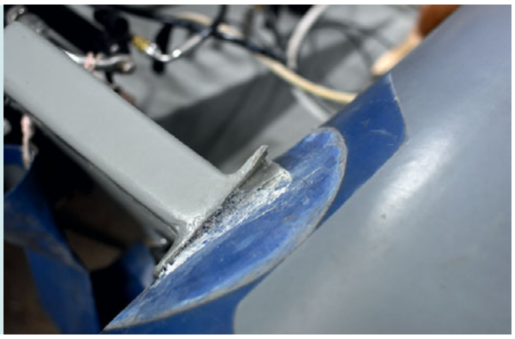
LOCKER

Rear locker formed, cable glands in place, and the deck recieving its final layers of fibreglass.



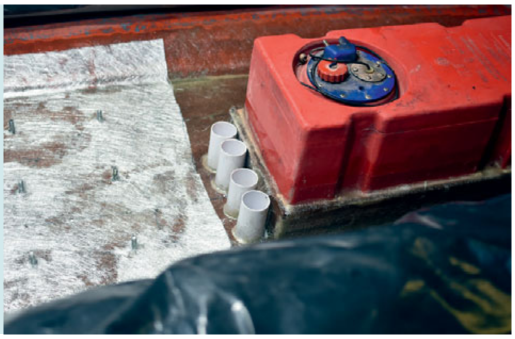
MISTAKES?

Disaster! I got the angle of the tube flanges wrong.



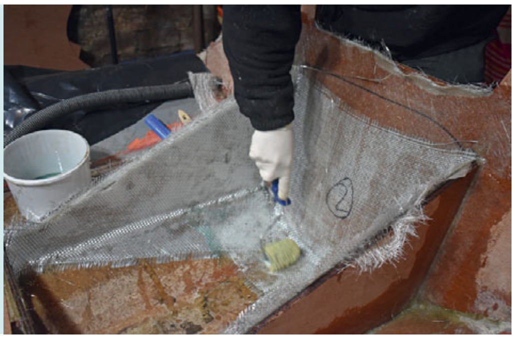
FUEL TANK

The existing fuel tank was built into the hull, 100mm below the deck



TRANSOM

Multiple layers of chopped strand, and woven roving matting bond the knees into the transom



Well, plywood comes in 8x4ft sheets, so it made sense to extend forwards in one piece a full 8ft between the hull and the deck, thereby forming longitudinal stringers to stiffen up the hull while spreading load throughout the length of the boat.

With wooden wedges supporting the keel against the trailer, I could confidently cut slots into the existing lateral stringers, allowing the new stringers to pass through, without any risk of distortion to the hull. Great care was taken to ensure the accuracy of the cuts, scribing each piece of plywood to sit snugly against each mating surface. Once I was happy, I could then bed each piece in place on a strip of chopped strand glass fibre matting, or CSM, soaked in polyester resin. Using wooden templates, clamps and screws to hold the new parts straight and square to each other, this new latticework of plywood could now be left to cure.

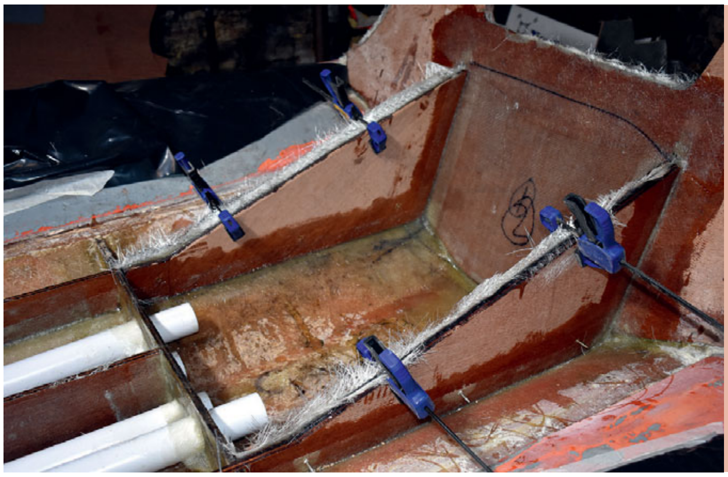
Each of the four knees are formed from three layers of 12mm plywood, the pieces currently installed being the centre. Each extra plywood component was now cut and scribed to shape once again. I was now at the critical stage of forming the bond between the transom and the knees/stringers.

Laying out all of the pieces of plywood in a logical manner and close to hand, as well as pre-cutting the endless number of pieces of fibreglass matting, meant that once I started the lay-up process I could do so without stopping, other than to mix resin.

Numerous layers of CSM and woven roving glass cloth were laid across the hull, up the sides of the knees and across the face of the transom. While the resin was still wet, I installed the extra plywood parts to give the knees their full thickness. These were again clamped together, squeezing out any excess resin to ensure a complete bond. This all sounds straightforward, but let me assure you that repeatedly cutting matting, mixing resin, reaching into the hull and performing the task of laying up is not easy, and I was now both physically and mentally drained.

The following weekend arrived with renewed enthusiasm, and with it the task of finishing off the transom. The final two layers of 12mm plywood were cut from the same template as before, but this time they needed four slots to pass over the new knees. Exactly as before, numerous layers of resin and matting were laid up, linking the knees with the hull and the transom. Generous amounts of matting and resin were applied to each of the transom pieces, which were clamped and screwed together once more, not only giving a good bond with each other but also trapping in place all the matting that forms the main structural core of the rear end of the whole boat. This technique was adopted throughout the hull.

I simply couldn't afford to replace her - and wouldn't want to anyway.

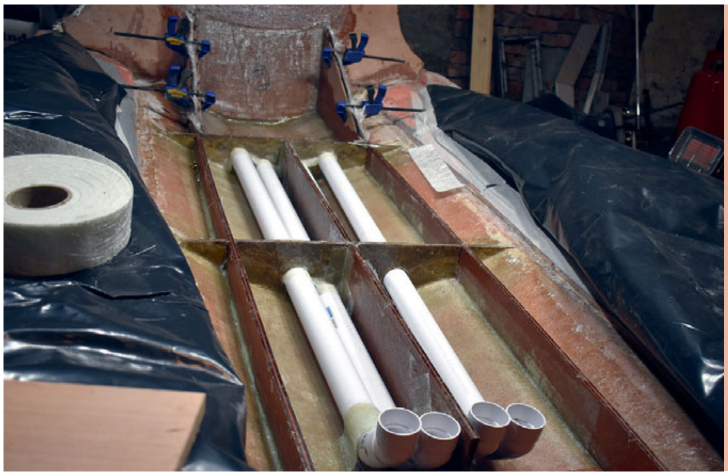


FIBREGLASS

Clamping the extra parts to the knees traps the fibreglass forming a strong composite structure. Note the four cable ducts protruding into the area that would become the rear locker

CABLING

Drilling the holes for the four cable ducts

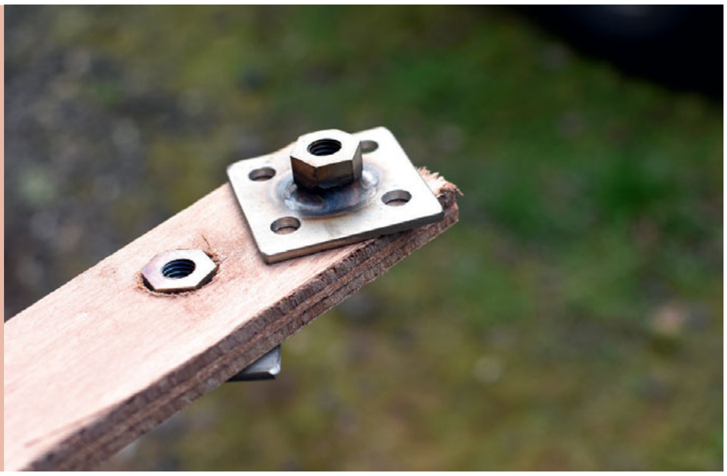


RIGGING

Four 50mm cable ducts were installed to reduce the risk of cables getting tangled whilst rigging the boat

DIY

My home made threaded inserts are thick enough to stand being drilled out and re tapped should they ever become damaged



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When I originally put this boat together, I made the major rookie error of not fixing the fuel tank to the deck.

Once complete, the transom was cut to its final shape, 3in higher and wider than before, either side of the engine, in a bid to reduce the amount of water that ships over the stern.

Midships

When I originally put this boat together, I made the major rookie error of not fixing the fuel tank to the deck. Despite my efforts with expanding foam, this 91L plastic tank has spent its life sliding and bouncing around inside the helm console, forever reminding me of the error of my ways.

Again, lots of ideas were thrown around. Is a larger tank available? Do I fabricate my own larger tank? If so, should it be aluminium or fibreglass? In the end, I decided that trying to go bigger simply wasn't worth the effort or expense. Instead I decided to build the existing tank into the hull, sat on its own small section of deck built off the lower chine rails 4in lower than the main deck. This would not only secure the tank in place but also slightly lower the centre of gravity.

Previously, when it came to rigging, all the cables and hoses transited the deck via surface-mounted trunking. Although not the most practical or aesthetically pleasing approach, it did allow easy routing or replacement of cables without getting tangled up - a problem often encountered within under-deck ducts. Wanting to be able to have a clear deck when needed, I decided to go with four separate ducts running from the helm console, under the deck and terminating inside the locker in front of the engine, which I formed by putting a lid over the two new centre knees.

My aim from the very beginning was to create a rear deck that was reconfigurable, meaning that I could move, remove or change seating to suit various needs. To do this, I made and installed 24 M10 stainless steel threaded inserts in a grid pattern at 200mm centres. The added bonus of these is that screw-in eyes can be easily installed for strapping down bags or fuel tanks.

With the threaded inserts installed from beneath, their square spreader plates were bedded on resin-soaked CSM before completely covering the entire underside of the deck with fibreglass, sealing it against any possible water ingress.

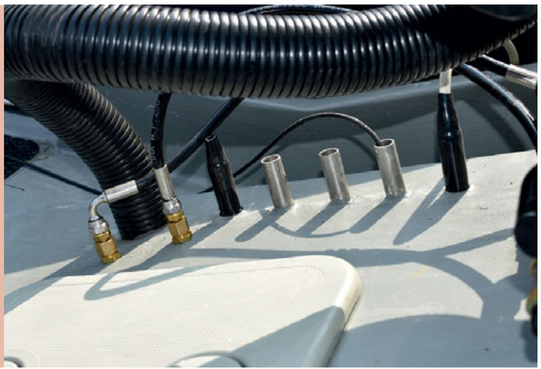
The installation of the deck would be a further improvement on the original. Rather than just being bonded in on the outer edge, resin-soaked CSM was laid in strips around the perimeter and along the top edge of each one of the stringers. Wasting no time, the deck was laid in place and held down with 12 concrete blocks to ensure maximum contact before securing to the stringers with around 60 screws.

Doubting my own abilities, I once again adopted the belt-and-braces approach to reinforcing the new transom. Having formed a locker by extending the deck up and over the top of the centre knees, I was able, as part of fibreglassing the top of the deck, to lay one long continuous length of the superstrong woven roving glass cloth all the way up the rear face of the transom, then down over the top of the locker and along the deck, further

When I originally put this boat together, I made the major rookie error of not fixing the fuel tank to the deck.

CABLE GLANDS

My take on cable glands. With each cable in place, i fill the tube with sealant then a pvc shroud is slid over. Note the new hydraulic steering hoses

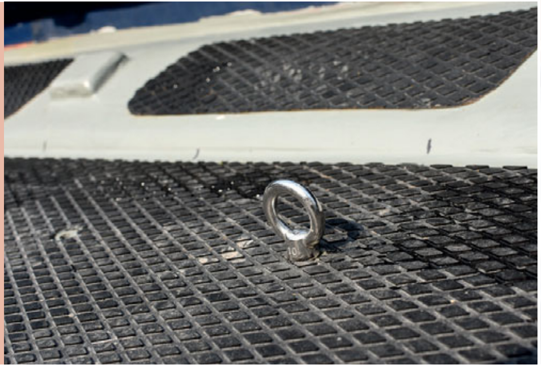


ANCHOR

The anchor chock located in front of the main console as before

EYE BOLTS

Eyebolts on the deck are just one use for the threaded inserts. Holes in the treadmaster were cut using a leather punch



Lots of time spent precisely cutting each new component

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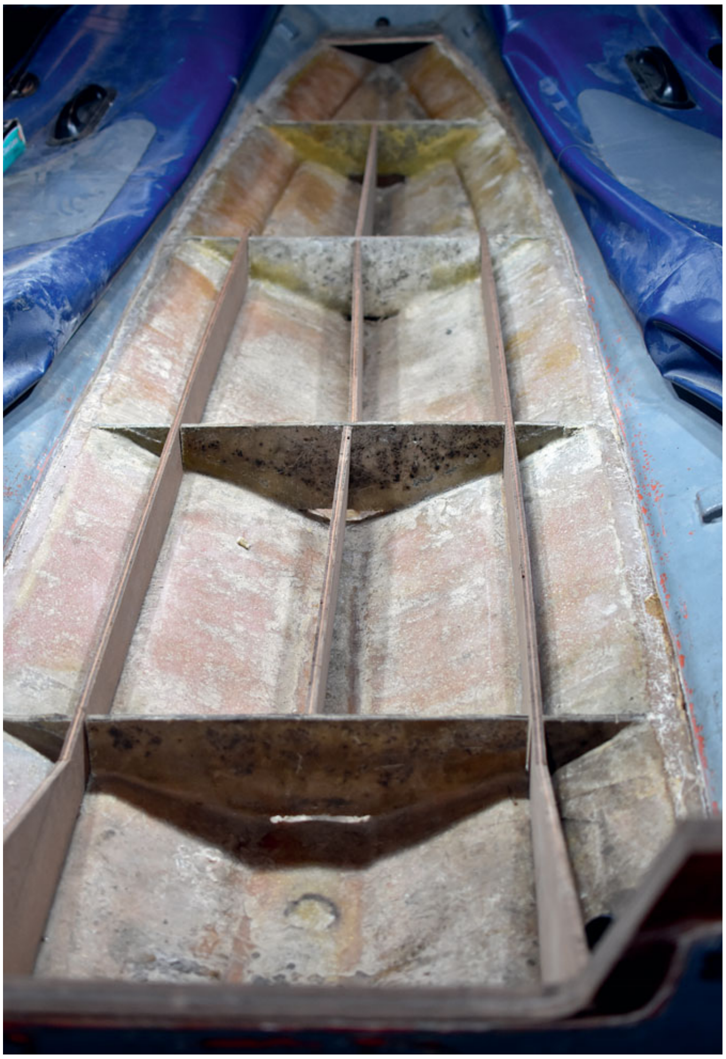
CONSOLE

Tom drilling the pilot holes ready for mounting the main console, this would also be bonded in place with fibreglass.

LAYING UP

Laying up fibreglass is incredibly labour intensive. Ensuring there are no air bubbles is absolutely essential



STRUCTURE

With all the new structural components trial fitted, fibreglassing could commence

ensuring that all of the parts remain as one.

Fit-out

With all the imperfections filled and sanded, the final layers of fibreglass laid up and the grey topcoat applied, I was now on the home straight. With just weeks to go before moving house, the pressure to complete the job was mounting.

Careful measurements of the engine mounting holes at the time of stripping down showed that Northwind Challenger's engines had always been mounted around an inch to the left of centre - no wonder she had a tendency to list to port! Having sought advice, I decided to mount the engine three-quarters of an inch to the right of centre to combat the propeller torque. Cables and hoses were now routed through the four ducts under the deck, with the hydraulic steering hoses rerigged through bulkhead fittings. Special thanks must go to Jason Golding at Fluid Air & Hydraulics for taking the time to come and work out a way of adapting the American fittings to standard UK BSP fittings, even going to the trouble of having some parts modified. Thanks to Jason, I now have easily replaceable, flexible hydraulic hoses with stainless fittings running from the locker to the steering ram.

The main disappointment for me was the deck covering. I really wanted to do something special with its design. I considered using a non-slip resin laid in a pattern, but my lack of experience put me off trying! I then settled on good old tried-and-tested Treadmaster. I looked at having the boat's name laser-cut into it, but on speaking with Dave we decided that it could look quite poor if the letter inserts didn't match the diamond pattern perfectly. So, as a compromise, I laid a full piece on the forward and rear decks, with angled patches, mirroring the tube top wear patches along the top chine. Holes were needed, of course, to leave the threaded inserts exposed, and these I cut with a 20mm leather punch from eBay.

I now have easily replaceable, flexible hydraulic hoses with stainless fittings running from the locker to the steering ram.

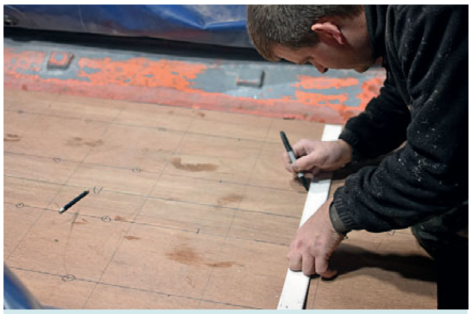
With a sigh of relief, I delivered the boat back to Dave at North West RIBs and Inflatables for the tubes to be reattached and began clearing out Carole and Viv's barn – my makeshift workshop.

With just one week to go before moving, I received the news I had been dreading - a text from Dave simply saying 'I think you need to come and look at your tube flanges'. Walking into Dave's workshop, the problem was immediately clear. The tube flanges I had formed to follow the radius of the tubes as they pass through the transom were at completely the wrong angle. I was not happy. I had held the inflated tubes in place to check them for fit, but once glued along the bottom edge in their natural position things were very different. I had no choice but to take the boat back to my makeshift workshop and leave it until after we had moved house.

Fixing the flanges was actually quite an easy job - but a lesson had been learned. Rather than making a former, onto which I would lay up the fibreglass, I took Dave's advice and laid up the new flanges against the inflated tube itself, with a piece of polythene in place to separate the resin from the Hypalon - a simple solution that now seems obvious.

The extra height I gave to the transom now provides so much more support to the tubes, holding their shape and reducing any amount of sagging they may have. In fact, pulling on the handles or lifelines now feels so much more substantial than before.

Due to all of the changes to the deck, my final



Great care was taken when setting out the inserts at 200mm centres

task was to modify my navigation frame - or rather adapt it to fit the new mounting points on the outer knees. I also took this opportunity to make a second mounting point for a VHF aerial, this one being in place for any future installation of AIS. With all the welding complete, it was off to the powder coaters to be blasted and refinished.

Words of wisdom

If you approach a specialist to undertake this kind of work for you, don't baulk at the price quoted. I spent around £1,000 on materials and lost count of the number of days spent. Make no mistake, this work is incredibly labour-intensive.

Whether you do the work yourself or pay a professional, try to have a clear plan in mind. You only want to do this once, so take the opportunity to make any improvements while you're at it.

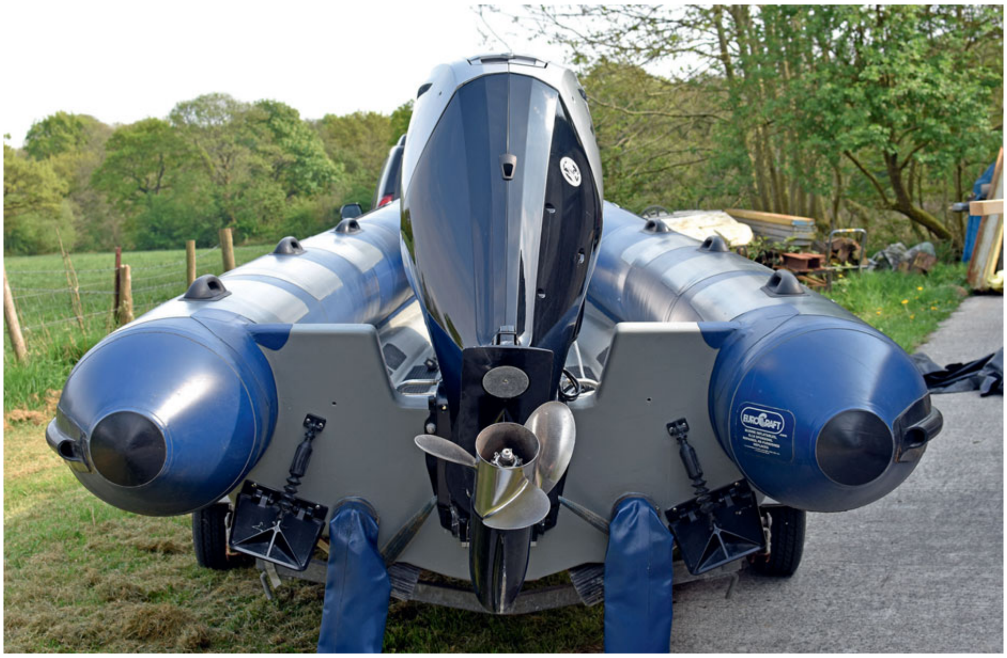
If you do take on the job yourself, do as I did and gain some advice from people in the business - but tread carefully as these people need to make a living too, and handing out free advice doesn't pay their bills.

Don't skimp on materials - it's simply not worth trying to cut corners.

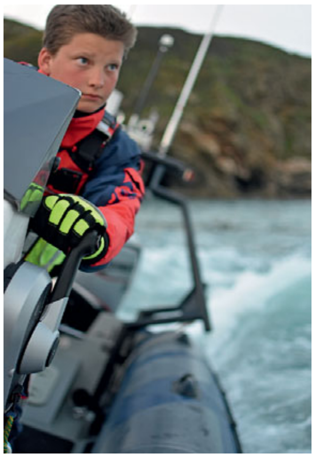
Finally, leave your phone well away from buckets of resin, as when they fall in they're a nightmare to clean, and my 'back' button still doesn't work properly!

With the restrictions that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to us all, finishing off this project has taken far longer than I had ever thought possible.

The finishing touches



The new higher and chunkier transom, shown here without the frame in place



Tom putting Northwind Challenger through her paces

The end result

With the restrictions that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to us all, finishing off this project has taken far longer than I had ever thought possible. It wouldn't have been right to complete this feature without seeing the finished boat being put through her paces, which is why I delayed sending this in for publication.

At the end of July, the Welsh government allowed our caravan site to open, and with that I was able to get back out to sea. I am not afraid to admit that I was nervous - after all, I was relying on my own handwork to keep my engine from simply falling off. My intentions were to take it easy - that lasted for around three and a half minutes! I decided that a true test was needed, and that if anything was going to fail, it needed to happen sooner rather than later.

My worries were unfounded, and with more and more sustained punishment being inflicted upon her in the choppy conditions, Northwind Challenger took it all in her stride, proving just how strong she now is.

And what of her personality? Had I upset her balance by adding more weight? Had I got anything wrong? Not at all. It was as if the old girl had been to a chiropractor - gone were all the creaks, rattles and bangs, and thanks to my repositioning of the engine she no longer heels to port. In fact, when throwing open the throttle, she stands up straight and skips onto the plane all the way past 40 knots. The extra rigidity of the hull gives you the confidence to take hard landings, while the raised transom reduces the amount of water sloshing over the stern.

Three people I really must thank once again for their advice and subsequent supply of their services or products (paid for, I may add) are Mike Witham of Witham Glassfibre, Dave Cowell of North West RIBs and Inflatables, and Jason Golding of Fluid Air & Hydraulics. Without these people, the rebuild would have been so much harder - their combined experience helped me to either avoid or overcome a great number of problems along the way.

Was it all worth it? Yes, without a doubt. I simply couldn't afford to replace her - and wouldn't want to anyway. The rebuild has given this incredibly capable old girl a whole new lease of life, and I really couldn't be happier! ■

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Late Starters: How to Prepare & Stay Safe this Autumn

With the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, you'd be forgiven for thinking that we'd never make it onto the water this summer. But here we are, emerging from the safety of our homes to enjoy the thrill and freedom that boating brings to so many of us. If you're planning Autumn boating, take some time to prepare your boat for fun days at sea. Here are some top tips from the RYA on how to go boating in a safe and considerate manner ...

Minimise the risk

Be conservative by minimising risk in your approach to boating:

- Know your limits
- Prepare before getting out on the water
- Keep in touch

We all know the mantra 'failing to prepare is preparing to fail'. So before getting back out on the water, make sure your boat is reliable and seaworthy. The last thing you want is to be drifting towards a shallow sandbank on a falling tide without a working engine or to run out of fuel in a secluded bay without any reserves. Calling the coastguard or emergency services is best avoided at all times. But now, more than ever, we all need to minimise risks to ensure the safety of everyone on the water.

It had been a long three months of home isolation, and we were excited to have the freedom to explore the ocean once more.

'Before you rush back out onto the water, get your boat in tip-top condition,' recommends RYA powerboat trainer Paul Glatzel. 'From time to time engines fail, so carry out essential maintenance such as topping up the oil, replacing old fuel and testing the cooling system. Carrying a secondary engine on board is a good idea too. But make sure you fire it up before going afloat - you don't want two broken engines in a time of need! You may also consider taking a couple of paddles to help get you out of harm's way in the event of a breakdown.'

Provisioning your powerboat is important too. 'Take a waterproof box with spares and repairs such as tape, cable ties, fuses and lines,' says Paul. 'A sharp serrated knife is useful should you get a line caught around your prop, and a well-equipped first-aid kit is vital. While most of the navigation information we need is on our phones, take paper charts, almanacs and tidal information as a backup. And last but not least, carry a good set of tools, including any gadgets that are specific to your boat or engine.'

The pandemic isn't over yet, and as much as we'd love to get all of our friends and family back out on the water with us again, we're taking it slowly until things improve.

While being out on the water is a time to enjoy yourself and have fun, Paul is also keen to remind us of the safety precautions we should take after a long time away: 'Number one, don't forget to wear a kill cord. I recommend attaching it around your thigh, not your wrist, and when the engines are off, drape the kill cord over the throttle to remind yourself and others to put it back on. Always take a spare kill cord too. Let others know that you are heading out on the water and when you think you'll be back ashore. We use the RYA SafeTrx app, which keeps a shoreside contact informed of your passage and alerts them should you not return in time.'

And what if something does go wrong and you need help? 'Raise the alarm earlier rather than later,' says Paul. 'If you do have a problem, contact the coastguard via CH16 on a marine VHF or 999 on a mobile phone. By letting the emergency services know about a potential issue early, they will be able to better assist you.'

Be considerate

Avoid placing extra strain on the RNLI and emergency services:

- Consider the impact of your boating
- Be mindful of others on the water or beach
- Watch and be ready to assist others if needed

Whether you're cruising down the river for a socially distanced picnic or blasting down the coast to find a quiet beach away from the crowds, think about the impact your boating activities may have on others at this time. Look out for fellow water users, give people plenty of space and be ready to assist others if necessary.

Tim Griffin, also an RYA powerboat trainer, set out on his 8.3 Coastline 300hp RIB as soon as he could. Below he shares his experiences of being out on the water since the lockdown in England was eased:

'As soon as the marina allowed us access to our boat, we couldn't wait to get it ready for our first outing. Luckily, the engine and life jackets were serviced over the winter, so everything was up together and ready to go, but we also ran some engine checks to ensure everything was working properly. Then, when the government gave us the green light, we headed back out on the water again. It felt terrific to slip away from our berth and blast out into the Solent. It had been a long three months of home isolation, and we were excited to have the freedom to explore the ocean once more.'

We've also refrained from taking other people on the boat to minimise the risk of catching or spreading the virus.

Tim was careful to take things slowly, though: 'We didn't want to have to call upon a recovery service or put any undue pressure on the emergency services. So for the first few trips, we only went a short distance from our berth and back again. This allowed us to check that everything was working as it should. After such a long time away from boating, we were also conscious that our boat-handling skills might be a bit rusty. The shorter trips allowed us to practise setting off, anchoring and coming alongside safely - it's amazing how muscle memory fades after a long time off the water!'

Tim also chose to head out when the weather was mild and the tides favourable: 'Rough seas and poor visibility can increase the risk of a boat breakdown, collision, man overboard or crew injury, so we played it safe. Plus, it's much more pleasant to go cruising on a beautiful sunny day with glassy sea conditions.'

Prevent the spread

Washing your hands, staying socially distanced and respecting local restrictions can also help curb the spread of the virus. But how can we adhere to these rules on the water? Tim gives us a few tips:

'While we were tempted to set off and explore all of our favourite places straight away, we took the time to build up the miles gradually. And as the lockdown restrictions have eased further, we've also avoided getting too carried away and remained cautious. Some anchorages can get very busy, especially when the weather is good, so we've been careful to keep our distance from others on the water and when heading ashore. We've also refrained from taking other people on the boat to minimise the risk of catching or spreading the virus. The pandemic isn't over yet, and as much as we'd love to get all of our friends and family back out on the water with us again, we're taking it slowly until things improve. In the meantime, we're grateful to be able to explore all of the wonderful bays, beaches and harbours that we have so close to home, and look forward to welcoming friends on board when it's safe to do so.' ■

For more information about the RYA's Return to Boating guidelines visit https://www.rya.org.uk/programmes/Pages/return-to-boating.aspx.

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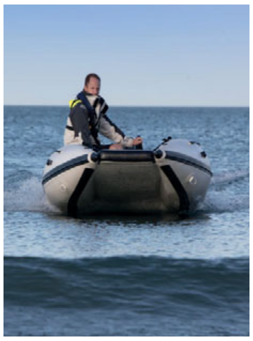

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What a Year!

RYA's powerboat trainer **Paul Glatzel** gives valuable advice on buying your first boat and getting on the water safely …

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At the beginning of the year, little did we know what it held for us all. Despite the devasting consequences for some, for many it's been a summer of getting into boating or spending more time afloat than they ever dreamed possible. But what next? **Paul Glatzel** looks ahead at the coming months on the water …

When lockdown hit us, the last thing anyone imagined was that for those selling new and used boats, and then servicing and fixing them, it could end up being a bumper year. Indeed, it's fair to say that once lockdown eased, the waters of the UK became busier than they have ever been, hosting a mix of seasoned boaters and many new to this wonderful pastime.

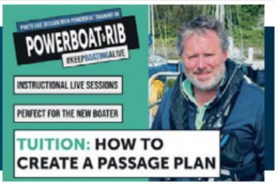
Powerboats, personal watercraft and frankly anything that floated flew off the shelves to the extent that many dealers had empty showrooms and surprisingly full pockets. Lifeboats and coastguard rescue teams across the UK were run ragged as craft that hadn't been started up during the winter period, and then the spring, were all switched on over a week or two, with the predictable consequence that many broke down and got into trouble. With furlough giving many people time they could never have dreamed of, marinas and launch sites have often resembled bank holiday weekends every day of the week when the weather has been good.

So now we are reaching the end of the warmer weather, what hints, tips and tricks do we have for those new and old to boating as we enter the autumn and then winter period?

For those new to our pastime □ welcome! Many new boaters purchased craft and went afloat before the training schools were back up and running in July, and therefore far fewer seemed to have gone afloat 'pre-trained' than in previous years. The results of that have been mixed, and the smiling faces on the gelcoat repairers around the marinas tend to suggest that perhaps a bit of out-of-season training is in order. Enjoying your

… it's never more important to ensure that those on land have some idea of what you are up to than when there are fewer other boaters around to help you.

Follow our Live Stream series with Paul Glatzel on our Facebook Page and catch up with previous episodes on our YouTube Channel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boat is about ensuring that you have a pleasant and safe time with friends and family, so if getting back to the marina and into a berth is proving challenging, then: i) remind yourself that you are not alone; and ii) reassure yourself that it's easy to fix.

For most powerboaters, the answer will be to undertake an RYA Powerboat Level 2 course, which basically gives you the core skills required to handle and navigate your boat from the slipway or marina, and safely through a harbour or estuary, to get to a beach or bay knowing that you are heading along a safe route. For those that need a bit more, look at both tailored training programmes to develop handling skills and navigation courses to build understanding of the theory behind getting from A to B. For those that have got Level 2 already, think about attending the RYA Intermediate Powerboat course as this addresses the skills needed to head slightly further afield. In case something goes wrong – and there is, of course, always the outside chance that it will – knowing how to call for help is key. Understanding your marine VHF radio will come from doing the RYA one-day radio course – time and money well spent. Spending the winter getting these courses nailed in a classroom or online can be great fun too.

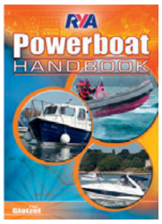
Crisp winter days afloat offer quiet waters, and in some locations no speed limits, so why not think of keeping your boat operating right through the winter period?

Understanding your marine VHF radio will come from doing the RYA one-day radio course

As summer turns to autumn and winter approaches, many people think about putting their boat to bed for a few months. Obviously, it depends where you keep your boat, what shelter your boat provides and how hardy you feel, but some of the best days afloat can be had in the winter when the waters are quieter. Crisp winter days afloat offer quiet waters, and in some locations no speed limits, so why not think of keeping your boat operating right through the winter period?

If you do choose to do so, get a list of tasks together to ensure that winter boating is straightforward and safe. Batteries may need to be charged regularly, and it's always worth checking the battery connections, making sure they are well greased and tight. I always

PAUL GLATZEL is a **RYA POWERBOAT TRAINER** and wrote the RYA Powerboat Handbook and the RYA Advanced Powerboat Handbook. He runs Powerboat Training UK in Poole & Lymington **www.powerboattraininguk.co.uk**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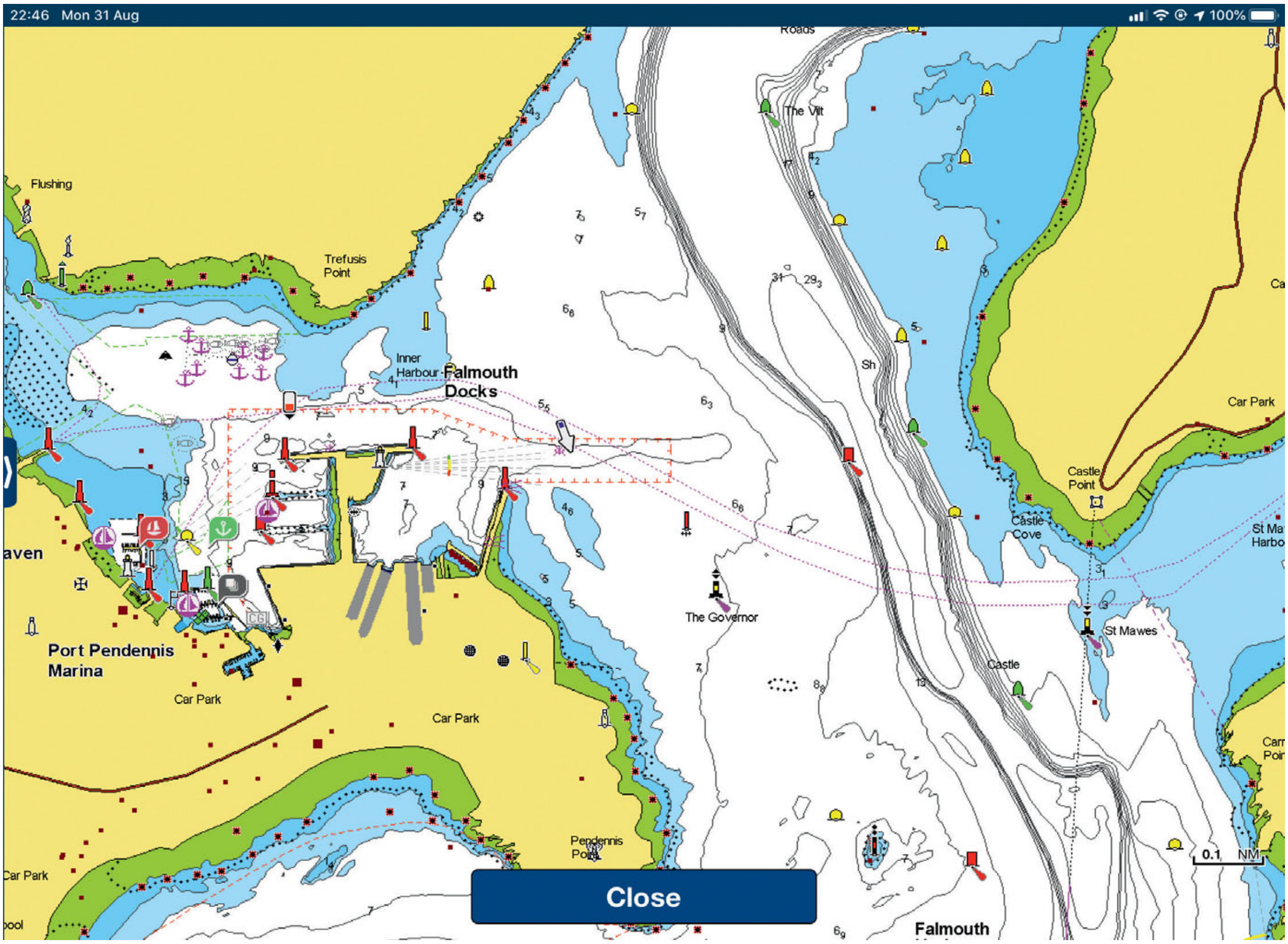
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The Navionics chart software package is really good and lets you sit back at home and navigate around new areas from the comfort of your sofa – a great way to while away those grotty winter days.

keep fuel tanks fully topped up to avoid condensation, and you should make sure all of your safety gear is in date and that you know how to use it in anger. When you do go out, it's pretty obvious that you should have plenty of warm gear with you, but taking a flask of warm drink coupled to some energy-rich snacks can make cold days a whole lot easier.

We've mentioned the RYA SafeTrx app before, but it's never more important to ensure that those on land have some idea of what you are up to than when there are fewer other boaters around to help you. If you haven't downloaded the app, we'd suggest you get it and accustom yourself to using it before heading out.

As for other winter jobs, why not get a plan together for where you want to go boating next year? The Navionics chart software package is really good and lets you sit back at home and navigate around new areas from the comfort of your sofa – a great way to while away those grotty winter days.

Of course, if you get the chance, adding bits to your boat over the winter period can be a great way to obtain your boating fix even if you cannot get afloat. Some of the newer chartplotters and depth gauges offer truly stunning results, with transducers that show the bottom profile in incredible detail. A new VHF, or perhaps an AIS receiver, could be a great winter purchase too.

However you choose to get your boating fix over the quieter months, just make sure that you have set yourself up for a great 2021 and hopefully we'll all get to start the season in a somewhat more normal way than we did this year. ■

Have fun afloat!

Check out **Powerboat and RIB TV** where **Paul Glatzel** and **Tom Montgomery-Swan** discuss all aspects of getting afloat from choosing a boat to navigating in rougher conditions.

PAUL GLATZEL

Paul Glatzel is an RYA powerboat trainer and wrote the RYA Powerboat Handbook and the RYA Advanced Powerboat Handbook. He runs Powerboat Training UK in Poole and Lymington (**www.powerboattraininguk.co.uk**).

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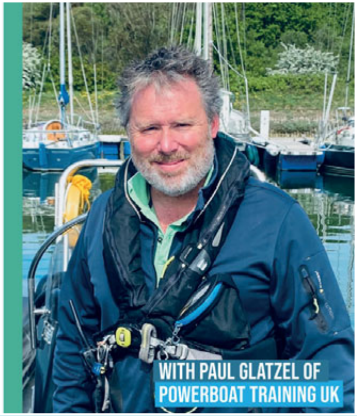
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Jim Russell: Porpoising

Jim Russell, of **AeroMarine Research**, discusses the issue of porpoising, why it happens and how to fix it ...

Figure 1: The severity of porpoising can range from annoying to aggravating or even dangerous.

Wouldn't it be nice to know why your boat has a tendency to porpoise, and how you can improve or eliminate a porpoising problem? The causes of porpoising and how to correct it are frequently mystifying. Here is an explanation of porpoising, how to mitigate the potential for porpoising during the design stage and how to fix it when it's a problem.

What is porpoising?

Porpoising is the cyclic oscillation of a boat in pitch and heave, with persistent or increasing amplitude, occurring while planing on smooth water. Picture a porpoise leaping through the water and you get the image of what it's like in a powerboat. The severity can range from an uncomfortable ride to aggravating or even dangerous.

Porpoising can become more than just an annoyance in the high-speed range, and can lead to loss of control, passenger risk and payload damage. It can even cause structural hull damage when the action becomes so severe that the hull is repeatedly overstressed. Porpoising can result in 'diving' or 'stuffing' (tripping over the bow) when the lowest trim angles that occur in the 'bow-down' part of the porpoising cycle cause the boat's nose to dig in. So a way of determining a boat's susceptibility to porpoising is helpful to the performance boat designer.

Here are two examples of porpoising complaints:

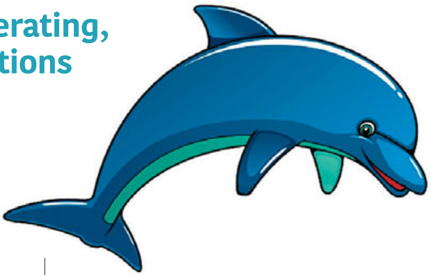
1) 'My Mod VP-style sport tunnel boat has a "hopping" motion at about 70mph. It's like porpoising, but it goes away at about 80mph. What is wrong with my set-up?'

2) 'I have a 24ft vee-pad hull that porpoises at one speed and won't stop. Why is this?'

Why does a boat porpoise?

Any vee hull or tunnel hull can be susceptible to porpoising depending on its design and set-up, but some hull designs are more prone to porpoising than others. For example:

There are several operating, set-up and design actions that we can take to minimise or prevent porpoising.



Flatter-bottom surfaces (vee or sponsons) are more prone to porpoising than steeper-deadrise hulls (a higher deadrise is better for avoiding porpoising).

Higher trim angles are more likely to initiate porpoising than lower trim angles (lower trim angles are better for avoiding porpoising).

Figure 3: Porpoising occurs when lift is generated at a sufficiently high trim angle or sufficiently low deadrise that it causes a dynamic instability of the hull.

How it works

There are two factors that influence if or when a boat will porpoise:

1) Is the design predisposed to porpoising? Some hull designs are more susceptible to porpoising

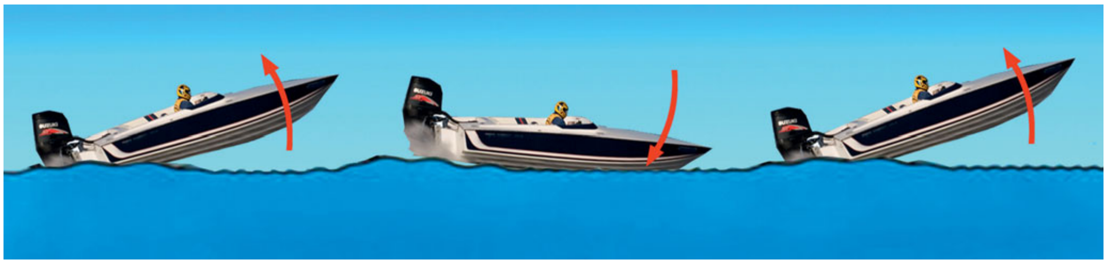


Figure 2: Porpoising is the cyclic oscillation of a boat in pitch and heave with sustained or increasing amplitude.

This article includes excerpts from the books **Secrets of Tunnel Boat Design** and **Secrets of Propeller Design**

Secrets of
TUNNEL BOAT DESIGN
The How's and Why's of the ultimate in high performance
by James D. Russell, P.Eng.

Porpoising is a function of the lift generated by your hull, the deadrise of your running surfaces and the trim angle that is needed to get that lift.

than others (e.g. lower deadrise, higher trim angles). There is a way to determine whether the design is likely to experience porpoising or not. It's good to know this at the design stage or when you're buying a new boat.

2) A trigger to initiate porpoising. When a hull experiences a significant change in the dynamic balance of forces, it will encounter some longitudinal instability, and if the hull design is one that is already susceptible to porpoising at this velocity, then the dynamic instability usually triggers the onset of porpoising. If there is no trigger or cause of instability, the hull may not porpoise at all.

Some boat designs are less prone to porpoising while others are very susceptible to it. Designs that are only moderately disposed to porpoising usually need a trigger to start the cycle. Other hull designs that are very vulnerable to porpoising at a critical velocity can begin porpoising all by themselves.

Design compromises: is the hull prone to porpoising?

For hull designs that have a tendency to experience porpoising, there is a particular combination of speed, hydrodynamic lift coefficient (efficiency), hull shape, hull deadrise and trim angle that will define the limits of porpoising.

Here's why the solution to porpoising is often a confusing issue:

As explained above, there are two main factors that influence whether

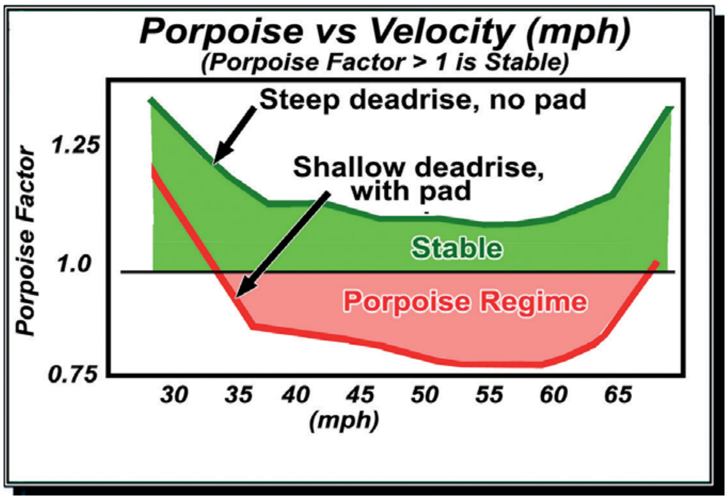


Figure 4: A hull design and set-up can be analysed to predict velocities where the hull is either 'stable' or in 'porpoise mode'.

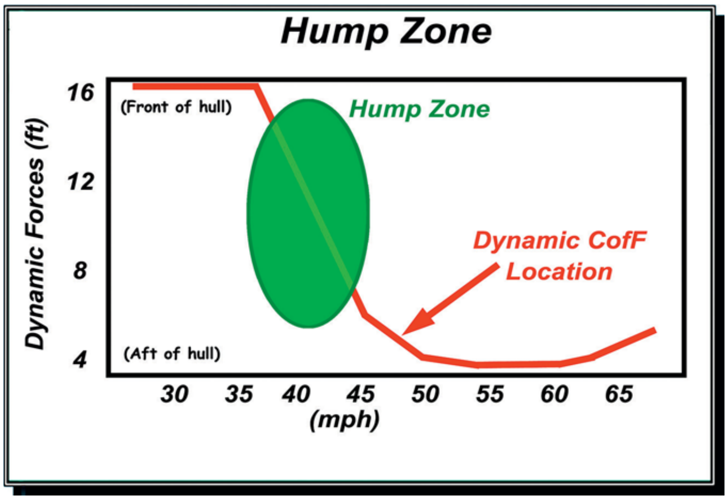


Figure 5: The 'dynamic centre of forces' is the combination of all lift and drag forces, and its location changes through the operating velocity range.

Reducing your trim angle in some way will always help a porpoising problem.

a design is prone to porpoising: a higher deadrise and lower trim angles are both better for avoiding porpoising. These two influences are confusing because they seem contradictory, and here's why …

Boat planing surfaces with higher-deadrise hull bottoms (better for porpoising) usually require operation at higher trim angles to compensate for their reduced lift efficiency - but that higher trim angle has a greater tendency to initiate porpoising.

So even though a higher-deadrise vee hull should have less tendency to porpoise than a low-deadrise bottom, since this high deadrise needs to operate at bigger trim angles, this in fact makes it more susceptible to porpoising. So there is no simple rule of thumb in designing to avoid porpoising!

This apparent contradiction makes designing porpoise-resistant hulls challenging. It's also why we often see well-known hull manufacturers with boats that are surprisingly susceptible to annoying porpoising. (There is an engineering method for assessing whether a design is predisposed to porpoising at any velocity: we use the 'Tunnel Boat/Vee Hull Design Program' performance software.)

Onset of porpoising: when will it start?

We can predict the speed at which porpoising might begin. For a boat design/set-up that is prone to porpoising, the onset is usually triggered by a rapid change in the centre of all the lift, drag and thrust forces as the boat accelerates. This combination of all the acting forces is called the 'dynamic centre of forces'. The 'dynamic CofF' changes throughout the operating velocity range and is different for every boat design/set-up. Most hulls have a speed where this CofF goes through a rapid and major change. It's when this trigger occurs that we usually see the onset of porpoising.

On a performance vee-pad hull, the 'hump zone' is the speed at which the balance changes from lift mostly from vee surfaces to lift mostly from pad surfaces.

Hump zone

As speed increases, all performance boats experience a shift in the dynamic CofF as they accelerate through what is called the 'hump zone'. For a tunnel hull, the 'hump' or 'transition zone' represents the speed at which the amount of aerodynamic lift (air lift from tunnel and aerofoil) becomes more significant than the hydrodynamic lift (water lift from sponsons). On a performance vee-pad hull, the 'hump zone' is the speed at which the balance changes from lift mostly from vee surfaces to lift mostly from pad surfaces. Every boat and set-up has its own 'hump zone' transition velocity.

Jim Russell: Porpoising

Porpoising: why it happens and how to fix it …

At the speed that the transition ('hump') occurs, the hull will always experience some longitudinal instability - and this often triggers the onset of porpoising. The hull experiences a dynamic CofF shift through the 'hump zone'. When driving your performance boat, you can usually feel the change when your hull enters the 'hump zone' velocity. This transition velocity can be accurately determined (by analysis) for any hull design and set-up, and can be altered by hull design, weight distribution, propeller selection and engine/hull set-up. The best performance hull designs minimise the 'hump zone' to one that is quite mild.

The onset of porpoising is usually triggered by a significant change in the dynamic CofF. On most boats, this trigger is the velocity that defines the 'hump zone'. We can determine the velocity at which any hull will experience its 'hump zone', and whether this is also likely to trigger porpoising.

So what do I do about it?

Porpoising is a function of the lift generated by your hull, the deadrise of your running surfaces and the trim angle that is needed to get that lift. If the hull design/set-up is prone to porpoising, the onset will occur at a velocity that triggers a change in the dynamic CofF. This change in forces is often the 'hump zone' built into your boat design. The change can also be due to weight shifting or even wind or wave conditions.

The resolution to a porpoising problem with a hull design is almost always addressed by causing the boat to run with less trim. If a boat is porpoising at a given speed and load, lowering the trim angle will reduce or eliminate the porpoising. There are several ways to get there, but the bottom line is to reduce the trim angle at the velocity of porpoising onset. Even if the hull design is operating in 'porpoising mode' through a full range of velocities, reducing trim in some way will improve or resolve the problem.

The onset of porpoising is usually triggered by a significant change in the dynamic CofF.

Above: A porpoising boat can be hard to steer.

Resolutions to an existing porpoising problem:

- Reduce trim angle
- Change static weight locations
- Change dynamic forces location
- Raise engine height
- Clean up hull bottom condition
- Optimise propeller selection
- Design with higher deadrise (bottom surfaces)
- Trim tabs

Reduce trim angle: When your boat begins porpoising, lowering the trim angle (using the engine trim buttons) will usually reduce or eliminate it. While this might seem like an unattractive method to correct the performance of the hull, it will at least get you and your passengers through the uncomfortable ride experience – even if it's only a temporary fix.

Changing trim angle while driving through the 'hump zone', even if less efficient, will also provide a better ride experience and, when well controlled, can reduce the range of the 'hump zone' substantially, thereby eliminating porpoising.

Change static weight locations: The onset of porpoising is influenced, in part, by the weight balance in the boat. Altering the deadweights in your boat (fuel, battery, payloads, etc.) can affect the speed and trim angle at which porpoising will initiate.

Weight distribution changes can also have a positive effect on the speed at which porpoising may initiate. Often such changes alone can avoid the onset of porpoising at your normal cruising speed.

Weight distribution changes can also have a positive effect on the speed at which porpoising may initiate.

Change dynamic forces location: Changing motor height, engine setback or propeller selection can all alter the dynamic balance of the hull – often reducing the porpoising effects. These are similar effects to changing trim angle and also help mitigate porpoising.

The resolution to a porpoising problem with a hull design is always addressed by causing the boat to run with less trim.

Raise engine height: Raising the engine to get the prop shaft higher will shift the dynamic CofF forward and reduce trim angle. Changing the setback of the engine can often alter the dynamic balance of the hull at the porpoising velocity so as to reduce the effect of porpoising or change the onset velocity to a speed where it's less annoying. Note that more HP also reduces trim angle.

Clean up hull bottom condition: Sometimes unplanned 'hooks' or 'rockers' in the hull's bottom surfaces can exaggerate the performance effects through the 'hump zone'. These variances in the hull bottom can sometimes be the trigger that initiates porpoising for a boat that is predisposed to it. Cleaning up the bottom lines can often solve the porpoising problem.

Optimise propeller selection: Propeller selection can often change the dynamic balance of the hull/set-up. For example, a change to a prop that provides more aft

This article includes excerpts from the books **Secrets of Tunnel Boat Design** and **Secrets of Propeller Design**

Secrets of
TUNNEL BOAT DESIGN
by James D. Russell, P.Eng.

> **Higher-deadrise hulls are less susceptible to porpoising.**

lift can alter the dynamic balance of the hull, and similarly change the speed at which porpoising begins – often eliminating the problem. Changing propellers to a set-up with less bow lift can reduce porpoising.

Design with higher deadrise: Higher-deadrise hulls are less susceptible to porpoising. Wider planing surfaces (vee-hull, vee-pad, sponson pads or centre-pod surfaces) can also reduce the tendency to porpoise. Admittedly these modifications are more complicated than some of the other tips, but designing for enhanced performance is always a better idea than fixing a problem. A small hull design change can sometimes do the trick, if you're adept at doing this kind of work.

Trim tabs: Adding trim tabs (or, to be more extreme, 'whale fins') will also improve a porpoising problem, but these will also affect the overall performance of the hull. Adding transom wedges can often help too, since they will allow for more negative trim travel, if it's required. One should be cautious when using trim tabs, especially at higher speeds, as the tabs can create instabilities and represent a potential 'trip' source when manoeuvring or turning. Tabs should be retracted when hulls are at higher velocities.

> **One should be cautious when using trim tabs, especially at higher speeds**

The bottom line

Porpoising will happen under two conditions: first, if the design of your boat is predisposed to porpoising; and second, when the hull experiences a significant trigger, such as a change in longitudinal instability. If the hull is one that is already susceptible to porpoising at this velocity, the dynamic instability usually triggers the onset of porpoising.

The good thing is that we can calculate whether a design is prone to porpoising, and we can analyse performance to predict the velocity at which we are likely to see its onset.

There are several operating, set-up and design actions that we can take to minimise or prevent porpoising. Reducing your trim angle in some way will always help a porpoising problem.

Safe performance boating and wear your kill chord!

LINKS FOR REFERENCE:

The fully illustrated, 13th edition of the book Secrets of Tunnel Boat Design, with over 200 pages of design practices and formulae and over 160 photographs, is now available.

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ABOUT AEROMARINE RESEARCH

Jim Russell is a professional engineer with a mechanical and aeronautics background.
Currently living in Canada, he has done extensive aerodynamic research at the University of Michigan, OH, and the University of Toronto, Canada, and marine research at the NRC water channel laboratory in Ottawa, Canada. His published works and papers are highly acclaimed and are specifically related to the aerodynamics and hydrodynamics of high-performance catamarans and tunnel boats, as well as vee and vee-pad hulls.

Russell has designed and built many tunnel and performance boats. As a professional race driver, he piloted tunnel boats to Canadian and North American championships. He has written powerboating articles for many worldwide performance magazines and has covered UIM and APBA powerboat races. He has appeared on SpeedVision's Powerboat Television as a guest expert on 'tunnel hulls', and was performance/design technical consultant on National Geographic's Thrill Zone TV show and editorial consultant on the Discovery Channel's What Happened Next?

Russell is the author of the books Secrets of Tunnel Boat Design and Secrets of Propeller Design. His company designed and published the well-known powerboat design software 'Tunnel Boat Design Program' and 'Vee Boat Design Program' specifically for the design and performance analysis of tunnel boats, powered catamarans, and performance vee and vee-pad hulls. 'Jimboat' is recognised for his advanced aerodynamic and hydrodynamic research and consulting on powerboat design, performance analysis, safety analysis, accident investigation, expert witness and education/training.

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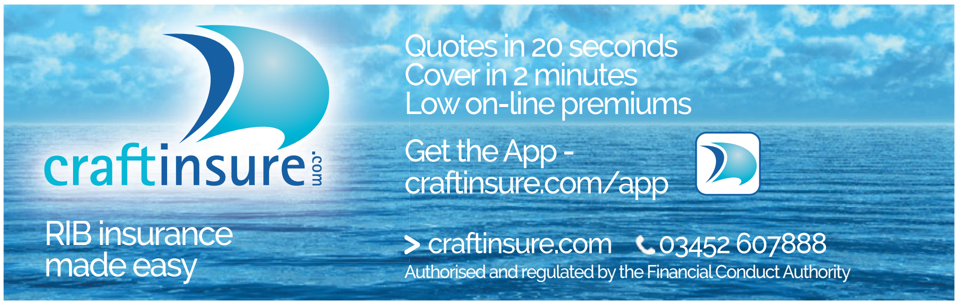

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